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OTHER PROVINCES.

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OTHER PROVINCES

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BOOKS BY CARL VAN DORAN

THE ROVING CRITIC
MANY MINDS
OTHER PROVINCES

OTHER PROVINCES

CARL VAN DOREN

NEW YORK
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TO

GLEN MULLIN

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INTRODUCTION

For half a dozen years I have been studying men and women in books. The ideas and emotions they have expressed, the stories they have told, the characters they have created, however interesting in themselves, have been for me symptoms of the disease or of the health of the writers. Personal gossip, of course, has often confirmed my guesses, but I remember no case in which gossip has furnished me with any serious contradiction of the written evidences. Why should it? After all, whatever gets into a book has come from or through the author. Much as he may try to hide himself, he can actually do nothing of the sort. His very subterfuges are confessions. His reticences are as eloquent as his boasts. Whether his ideas are his own, that is, are convictions and not merely things to say, is apparent on the surface, or at least no deeper than any expert eye can penetrate. As for his emotions, he has as little chance to deceive an atten-

tive critic concerning them as a man has to deceive a grown woman concerning his love or lack of love for her. So with the stories a writer tells. If a story came through its narrator as water comes through a conduit, the situation might be different. As a matter of fact, the simplest narrative is reshaped by every story-teller unless it is memorized and slavishly repeated—and then it has a singsong which there is no mistaking. Characters, too, have about them always some trait of their creator. Even when they are in no sense projections of his own self, they belong at any rate to the types of persons in whom his imagination can be interested; and no one is interested in everybody to the extent of entering imaginatively into everybody's career and making a record of it. No, behind every book I see the author.

Just now I am tired of authors. The documents they offer me are at once too voluminous and too explicit. By their volume they tell me a great deal more than I need to be told. By their explicitness they tell me a great deal that I do not care to reveal. If I had been disposed to make a wanton use of secrets, I could have

started a dozen scandals. Being in no way thus disposed, I have been discreet. Discretion of this kind, however, suggests to me the hunting done by princes: the game is rarely savage and the sport is invariably public. To engage in it you do not have to get up at unpleasant hours or go to outrageous places or run the risk of disappointment or danger. The whole enterprise has rules as definite as those of a court function. Well, an author is public quarry, and a critic, though not precisely a prince, is bound to observe the regulations. And as a prince must now and then want to get away from the royal beaters and try his luck in the open field, so a critic now and then wants to leave all books behind and fix his scrutiny upon men and women whom he can study without seeing them through a medium already prepared. I am such a critic and I have temporarily forgotten the rules.

No doubt the method is essentially the same in both modes of research. Every man is a critic toward his acquaintances. He listens to what they say and watches what they do. After a time he reaches a point of knowledge beyond which he does not expect to have to go. Tell him, at that

point, that one of his friends has told a lie, or that another has told the truth superfluously, and he will not believe you, at least without evidence of extreme weight. He has drawn in his mind a pattern of each friend and he has only to ask himself whether some new detail fits the pattern. Stupid men draw these patterns badly; dogmatic men draw them too early and are too positive about them; wise men sketch the first outlines quickly, and do not count them finished till their friends are dead, if then. They know that to the living anything may happen, and that about the dead the most incredible truths may leak out. But be the observer who he may, he is continually taking notes upon the persons whom he meets. The child in the cradle has begun the process. It smiles at some of its visitors, snubs some, bursts into tears when some come too near. Servants, behind a mask of decorum, form judgments quite accurate enough for their purposes. Teacher and taught, employer and employed, lover and beloved, neighbor and neighbor, stranger and stranger even—all of them are busy drawing patterns of one another. Because they do not pub-

lish their conclusions, they are lay critics, but they are critics none the less.

Now I am a professional critic, at the moment practising my profession upon materials about which I have hitherto written very little. They are, however, the materials which above all have concerned me. I should be as ashamed to have it generally supposed that I read nothing but books as I should be to have it supposed that I read nothing but good books, to the neglect of those rough-hewn works in which lies so much life waiting to be picked up and interpreted. And if there are more sprawling books than completed ones, so are there endlessly more books which have not been written than books which have. For the adventurous reader, nothing can be so exciting as to come upon a library of unwritten books. But that is exactly what ordinary existence is. At least, that is what it is to me. I seem to myself to wander in a crowded wilderness of dramas and epics. Not for years have I talked with any one five minutes without catching sight of a whole novel built up around him. Nor do I refer to the game, about which the innocent and

sentimental prate, of making up stories about people. I have reference solely to the drama which forces itself upon me as soon as any person, by speaking about this or by keeping silent about that, indicates the center of the action of which he is the protagonist. For every living creature is the protagonist of some action. There he stands, his past stretching out behind, his future stretching out before him, and all the rest of the universe ranged round him in concentric circles. I do not say that every living creature interests me. Of a good many persons around whom I have seen unwritten novels hovering I must own that I should not take the trouble to read those novels if they were written, much less try to write them. I do not say that I read many unwritten books as closely as I might. But I do say that I spend more hours with them, all told, than with the written kind, and I get more pleasure out of them.

In a happy interval between more formal tasks I have here set down my observations upon certain obscure persons whom I have known well or little. Some of them told me all they had to

tell; some of them told me nothing directly, and I have had to construct their stories out of hints picked up. The amount of my knowledge has guided me in the shaping of my narratives. Where I had a great deal to go on I have as a rule tried to outline an entire character by the device of exposition; where I had almost nothing, I have been satisfied to let that little speak for itself through action. If the results are virtually the same in either case, it is because actions speak so much louder than words. At the same time, I have not undertaken to tell stories, but to present characters. Though you study a man's actions, you study them to find out about him. Any one of them might have been performed by some one else. He alone could have chosen his peculiar combination of deeds and words. They establish his latitude and longitude, trace his boundaries, and fill in his light and shade. When these things have been done, there remains, beyond analysis, the final item by virtue of which he is unlike any other creature, living or dead. In each of these studies I have sought to get at that central mystery, and if I have failed to do it, it is not for lack of pains or candor.

INTRODUCTION

I lately closed a book with the statement that, having wearied myself with professional criticism, I planned to withdraw to other provinces. This book deals with one of the other provinces.

OTHER PROVINCES

THE SHADOW OF A TRIANGLE

DRIVING to the country Friday afternoon with guests for a week-end, I was so intent upon the traffic through which I had to make my way that I had got beyond White Plains before I suspected the situation, and had slipped from Westchester into Connecticut before I was at all sure concerning the bare outlines of the triangle in which Edith, Minturn, and Hamilton were involved. It grew more obvious under the moon, and became positively conspicuous, to me at least, as, on the broad, level road between Ridgefield and Danbury, I let out the motor to a speed I had not risked before, until we swept around those long curves with the engine humming a tune which brought the moods of all of us into a kind of communicative sympathy.

Edith sat at my right, Minturn directly behind her on one of the extra seats, and Hamilton beside him on the other. Though her husband was

thus closer to her, I noticed that she gave most of her attention to Hamilton. This was natural enough, since Minturn is ordinarily silent, most of all when his wife is as gay as Edith was that night. But I could not help feeling something less customary in the atmosphere. Even if I had been unable to see the glint in Edith's eyes as she looked across her shoulder and past me to Hamilton, and had been unable to detect a new ardor in his voice, I should have noted, I think, the current of excitement which flowed back and forth from one to the other, careless of me but careful of Minturn. The two contrived to let me guess, certainly without meaning it, that they were more solicitous about Minturn's feelings than they would have felt obliged to be had there not been something irregular in their own relationship.

I could not tell how far either of them was conscious of this solicitude, which took, indeed, different forms in Edith and Hamilton. With her it showed itself in a tendency to defer to Minturn on trivial matters of opinion, as if his judgment had suddenly become important to her. With Hamilton it showed itself in a tendency, which I measured as less spontaneous than Edith's, to

make occasional deliberate efforts to draw Minturn into the conversation and both to laugh and listen with a respect which Hamilton rarely showed any one else. As to Minturn, I could not quite determine, either then or later, whether he entirely felt the subtle tension. He may have been too unimaginative; he may have been too inarticulate; he may have been too civilized. At any rate, he gave no sign which I could identify.

I remember smiling to myself at the instinct which led the lovers to spare the husband at such a time. Edith, I supposed, was anxious, out of genuine wifely affection, not to hurt him, and Hamilton must have had some vague notion of atoning to Minturn with politeness for the insignificant status to which he might hold himself to be reduced. Whatever their precise motives, they were playing rôles which, I smiled again, seemed little like those which might have been expected. To this considerate region of good manners had moved the pangs of conscience about which the theater, dealing with similar themes, is eloquent.

In my own mind I had called them lovers, but I shortly found that I had been precipitate. Arrived at my farm-house in the Taconics, I busied

myself with the lamps in the drawing-room while Minturn lighted a fire on the cold hearth. There was a prolonged moment of delay during which the room was virtually in darkness. Then, when the flame came up in the first lamp, I turned in time to catch a by-play which was even more illuminating. Hamilton had evidently sought to take advantage of the moment and had ventured a caress, but the hand which he had caught at was being withdrawn, if not abruptly at least decisively. Edith had, without actually repulsing him, nevertheless resisted. She was not yet ready to be a partner in his stealth. So far, I told myself, she had not yielded to Hamilton's suit.

In the sunlight the next day I thought at first that I might have been mistaken in my interpretation of these facts, but I was not long in doubt. When the four of us, with my wife and Marian, set out for a walk around Barrack Mountain, Edith and Hamilton kept drifting together like steel and magnet. She, I could see, was half afraid. She would leave him to walk with me or with Minturn, or between the other women, not so much in mere coquetry as in a fascinated uncertainty. Discreet as he was, Hamilton never

wavered. No matter how much he might distribute his words among us, they were all for Edith. If she halted, he was at her side. Whenever she spoke, he heard her, even though he might be apparently talking to some one else. This intentness, while it must have flattered her, presumably also worried her. It implied more than she was yet willing to admit or to enjoy. She still inhabited a debatable ground from which the adventure to which Hamilton called her probably looked at once charming and terrifying.

I exaggerate if I give the impression that the affair was then as clear a thing as I have since come to understand it was. My wife, for instance, had not even noticed it, though when I questioned her late in the afternoon she recalled details which made her agree with me. Meanwhile, the pursuer seemed to me to be gaining ground. By comparison with Minturn, who had been unusually silent, had panted on the hills, and had come back to the house fagged out, Hamilton was gallant and insouciant. At the same time, the fire which warmed him had roused all his faculties. I had never known him to be so entertaining before. As we sat on a stone wall

from which we had watched the sun go down in splendor, he led us in singing all sorts of absurd and sentimental songs; and when we had gone indoors he started a hundred amusing topics and said the best things about them. Love, perhaps, had gone to his head, as if it had been liquor, but he carried it so well that he did not spill his secrets before the party.

Edith could not have helped realizing that this glittering display was primarily for her. Increasingly she responded to it. I had always believed her a little cool and stiff, but now she was alive and warm. Once when Hamilton, on some casual pretext, tousled her smooth hair, she met his hand, I saw, half-way. I had the sense that an electric charge had passed between them. Later, when he sat beside her on the couch, her bare arm seemed to rejoice in his rough sleeve, and more than once she leaned unnecessarily against him. He contrived to scuffle with her, over a cigarette case which he claimed was his, prolonging the scuffle to a point which showed that they both took pleasure in it for its own sake. And when I followed the others out for a last look at the soft moon before we went to bed, I

saw his arm unmistakably about her, this time not repulsed.

It was with a curiosity about which I felt a mild compunction that I studied their faces the second morning, to see whether they had fallen back from the position which they had reached the night before. So far as I could judge, they had not. Their first meeting, indeed, I did not witness, since both had gone out early into the garden, and when I came upon them were bending over a bed of marigolds as if botany were their only concern in the whole world. But there can hardly have been any strain in their attitudes such as I had perceived earlier. Possibly without any speech at all, they had drawn close together. The dew was upon their love as it was upon the day.

I remember wondering whether words could ever express the feelings of a lover who wakes with the sun and walks out into the bright air. Sleep may have restored him, but his body is never fully alert as soon as his love. He feels it racing through him, quickening his veins, like a vivid child running through a house at dawn to startle older sleepers. He feels it like a flame

licking at some heavy substance which has grown cold. He feels it like a light bursting into a cave full of stubborn shadows. Love at this hour with its uprush lifts the lover till he tingles and walks on clouds. He seems to contain more than he can bear to contain. Sensations pour in upon him, so wide love has opened all the windows of his spirit, faster than his senses can absorb them. He leaves the temporal earth and whirls in the eternal ether.

But I remember wondering, also, what Edith, already married, and Hamilton would do with the emotion which had apparently invaded them. There was, after all, Minturn to be taken into account. Generous as he might prove, the lovers were nevertheless far from free. A drama of some sort was bound to be enacted. I could not escape a vague responsibility, because I had unwittingly furnished the action a stage on which to be carried out, and I shrank from having the problem pressed so close upon me. If we had been in town, I might have seen only a few items of the complication, or none at all. Here, the scene was narrowed and simplified, as if art itself had brought it before my eyes.

At the lake that morning, to which we had gone an hour or so after breakfast, matters came to their singular climax.

Having dressed in the rough boat-house, we had all swum to the float anchored some fifty yards away, and were dawdling or skylarking upon it or in the water near by. Though it had been so hot the past week that the lake was warm and still as milk, there was a crisp touch in the August air. Stretched in the sun on the float we could be comfortable for a time, but then, growing chilly, we would be obliged either to slip into the water or to begin to stir about. Most of us preferred to paddle lazily in the water, but Hamilton and Edith were alive with energy. She was taking an unmistakable pleasure in his lithe strength, while he was no less unmistakably delighted by the grace and sweetness of her brown body in its cherry suit. They made a handsome pair, charmingly at war, pushing one another off the float, ducking and splashing one another in the water, contending in preposterous games which he exulted to win and she to have him win.

Not only they but all of us became intoxicated with the careless freedom of the occasion. The

lake, except for us, was deserted, and it was completely silent except for an echo now and then thrown back when some voice rose into a shout. The float was a rollicking island in the midst of a gray sea, a *fête champêtre* against a background of wilderness. We were the first men and women in the universe, or the last. Nothing beyond the moment claimed us. No wonder we became more and more hilarious. When we were tired of diving from the spring-board and the ladder, we invented new amusements. Hamilton and I swung the women by their wrists and ankles one by one out into the lake, laughing at their screams. The three of them set upon each of us and upon Minturn, and tried with other screams to thrust us into the water. The float for several seconds would be a wild turmoil of arms and legs, and then would suddenly be empty while we tumbled and splashed beside it.

In this hurly-burly I noticed that Hamilton kept always at a discreet distance from Minturn, even when Edith would take refuge behind her husband to escape some mimic danger. At such times Hamilton would turn aside to threaten some one else. But luck in the long run was bound

to be against him, when we hit upon the sport of seeing which one could clear the deck of all the others. There came the moment when Minturn, having pushed me and all three women off, turned to Hamilton.

Then Hamilton's tact failed him. He accepted the challenge, met Minturn's rush head on, and with him began to struggle back and forth across the slippery planks. As the rest of us returned we crouched under the diving-ladder to give the two a clear space. Minturn looked heavy and slow beside his rival, but he was really strong, though not quite dependable in wind. He had evidently expected to catch Hamilton off his guard. Failing in this he gave back at first, and then rallied with a kind of smiling desperation. I felt that the smile was partially assumed. However much or little he may have been aware of their predicament, he must have been a little bored at Hamilton's boyish rowdyism. Hamilton, I am sure, after a second regretted the momentary blunder which had led him into the plight, but he was too much excited by love and by the presence of Edith to be quite prudent. At first he too bore himself lightly, but as the even con-

flict lengthened out, he became more serious. I could see his face grow tense.

He dropped suddenly to one knee and tried to throw Minturn over his head, but the older man clutched him and saved himself. The two rolled over and over for a puffing minute, then scrambled to their feet again. Hamilton, increasingly on the aggressive, attempted by a feint to trick Minturn off his balance near the edge of the float, and was again thwarted by a clinch. They clawed the air, but regained their footing. Hamilton broke loose and retreated to the end of the float. Minturn followed, missed his second rush, and again saved himself by catching his antagonist in his arms. Turning, he pushed Hamilton slowly back, closer and closer to the edge. Hamilton whirled, his foot slapping the floor so that we all laughed. They stiffened again in the center of the float.

"Call it a draw," I counseled them.

"Wait till I drown him," said Minturn.

"Yes, wait," said Hamilton. As he spoke, he tore himself out of Minturn's grasp and, when the other staggered, pinioned his two arms behind

him. Then, with this advantage, he began to shove Minturn toward the water.

I am wholly at a loss to explain how Hamilton, imaginative as he is, can have so far forgot himself. But his blood was heated, he was in love, and Edith crouched under the diving-ladder. Some dim atavism must have stirred within him, prompting him to behave as if he were in the primeval forest, victorious over a rival for the favors of a woman whom both desired. I wanted to call out. It was, however, so little my affair that I could not. I had to stand there, as if chained, and watch him in his madness.

I felt a chill silence settle down upon me as Minturn's sliding feet, seeking vainly for a foothold on the wet boards, approached the edge. The beaten man was panting, his shoulders heaving in the effort to wrest his arms out of this tight grip. The effort was useless, and Hamilton was irresistible. But at the edge he did not hurl Minturn immediately into the water. He started to let his victim fall, then drew him back. "Who's going to drown now?" he questioned. "Get ready," he commanded, and braced himself.

"Get set," he commanded again, and rocked forward. "Go," and he flung Minturn sprawling, adding a thrust with his foot which sent his rival out of sight.

And then Hamilton, laughing, turned to the spectators. "Who's next?" he asked us.

Edith, her eyes not meeting his, had dived straight into the water beside the emerging Minturn. When she came up she caught her husband's shoulder and so drew herself to the float.

She hardly left his side during the remainder of that day. I saw her walking hand in hand with him on the way home and heard her chaffing him, with gay lips but with solicitous eyes. After lunch they stood on the porch and together watched the clouds which had begun to roll up. And later, when we were all taking our seats in the motor to return to town, she insisted that Marian ride with me while she herself sat close to Minturn.

I think I understand something of the swift processes which went on inside Edith while the two contestants struggled on the float. There was, of course, her instinctive feeling that Minturn was hers, a part of her, and that she with

him had been wounded by the indignity. But I imagine that the deciding element was less simple than this. She is not of that primitive disposition which could have been thrilled at perceiving herself to be the gage of battle. With what a shock, then, she must have realized that she had become precisely that, in a conflict of which this tussle was the shadow. Only, the tussle was a vulgar shadow, a mere parody. She had doubtless cherished her conception of her love on a plane a long way removed from anything so broad and flat. Hamilton had dragged the conflict down to a level which she could not bear to contemplate, because to contemplate it unconcerned would have been to accept a valuation of herself which was ridiculous if not revolting. She was not a doe standing by while two bucks strove to find out which of them should possess her. Yet here, coming as if to a catastrophe, was a bald plot in which she could not help seeing that unwelcome rôle assigned to her. All that was sophisticated in Edith started back, and her keenest emotions accompanied her in her retreat.

THE BITTER OUTLINE

If you go among the Cornwalls in Connecticut—North, East, South, or West Cornwall, Cornwall Center, Cornwall Plains, Cornwall Bridge, or Cornwall Hollow—looking for Yankees of the sort thought of as quaint by summer visitors, you will not often find them. Once I thought I had found one; he, however, told me that the last true Cornwall Yankee had died some fifty years before. Certainly my nearest neighbor is not of the eccentric stock. Except for a few Doric touches in his speech, he might be a good and wise man of any age, withdrawn from the world to his native province.

Matthew Bradford is the fifth person of that name to own his land, which has never belonged to any person who was not named Matthew Bradford. In his youth this Matthew went to Waterbury and there built up a considerable trade in farm products, but he later lost so large a part of his fortune that he was obliged to retire

to the homestead which he had hitherto maintained rather out of piety than out of any more profitable instinct. Since I have known him I have rarely seen him leave his house, though he goes now and then to church, to the village three miles away, and, in summer, to a spring in Cornwall Hollow for water which he prefers to that in his own well. Wifeless for a dozen years, and childless, he has a lean, fussy housekeeper whose husband slackly does the work on the farm with the help of their half-grown boy. This tame ménage the old man governs from his habitual seat, in all but the coldest weather, on the narrow porch from which he looks across a meadow beyond which are a swamp, a row of maples, gradual hills, and the sky.

Frail even when the sun shines, he almost hibernates during the bitter winter. Once I came to Cornwall in April, about some early prospects for my garden, and was shocked at the apathy into which he seemed to have sunk. He was not surly, of course, nor was he particularly silent, but he was not responsive in his usual degree. That grave voice which always charms me with its rich tone and its tempered diction

might almost be coming, I felt on this occasion, out of a cave in which its possessor had taken refuge from the driving snow of which a few packed drifts still remained. Or rather, I perceived in a few moments, he was answering me from a deep region within himself where he had lived with his thoughts during a season when there was little else in his universe to distract him. Now he could not emerge instantly, but had slowly to unfold his senses to the sun. The image which his state suggested, I finally understood, was that not of a cave but of a brook, bound with ice, yet hardly the less itself beneath its fetters, bright, clear, cool. By the end of May, when I returned, the covering ice had melted and my neighbor, sitting upon his porch, greeted me with his customary zest.

It was on this May afternoon that I first discovered how little and how much he saw across his meadow and his swamp.

"I suppose," he said, "you can see the new leaves on the willows. I envy you. That has always seemed to me the loveliest green of the year, but I can't distinguish it any more from the other shades."

I knew him well enough to know he was not inviting sympathy, and I spoke of the willows, not of his eyes. And I was no less discreet when, later, he pointed to a noisy robin skirmishing in the grass only a few yards away.

"I couldn't be sure it was a robin if I hadn't heard it crying just now." He smiled at his own phrase. "When I was a child my mother said the robins sounded to her as if they were crying, and I have always thought of their song in that way."

We talked about the varied cries of birds. Then I noticed that his gaze was fixed again upon the meadow.

"Do you see that cloud-shadow coming toward us?" he asked. "I can guess almost to a second when it will reach the house. The shadows are my chief entertainment. If you watch you will see how they keep the valley always changing. Some days they are very leisurely. To-day they go like the wind. They are my moving pictures."

As I looked, another shadow broke over the ridge of the hills, rolled down the long slope, turned the row of maples a darker green as it

touched them, swept solidly across the swamp and meadow, and went by us with what I almost thought was a swish. I half caught my breath. Similar shadows, I realized, must have been breaking over us all afternoon as we talked, and I had not noted them. Yet at a few quiet words from this quiet man they had become as tangible as a salt wave. He who saw so little that color had almost disappeared from the landscape for him, as well as all small objects unless they were nearly under his hand, saw so much that he had for me added a new spectacle to nature. I found I had suddenly a changed conception of him. During the two summers in which I had daily seen him sitting on his porch looking out across the meadow I had imagined him as wrapped almost entirely in his own thoughts and memories. Now I knew that he had been subtly alive to the rapid patterns which the sun painted with so powerful though with so coarse a brush upon the wide canvas of the valley. He was a connoisseur whom I had not suspected.

"I have been troubled with my eyes this past winter," he told me without apologies, "but I think they are better lately. Certainly, though,

I have little reason to complain. You probably do not know how near I came to losing my sight altogether. A few years ago I was so much troubled that I went to an oculist in Waterbury to have my eyes examined. He frightened me by telling me that I could not count on seeing anything for more than a few months longer. I shall never forget how desperate I felt. On my way home I made a kind of compact with God. 'God,' I said, 'if you will keep me from going blind, I will never ask for another favor from you. I will be content with whatever else may come to me.' I can't say that I stopped with my prayer. I made myself spare my eyes in every way possible. I sat for hours day after day with my eyes closed. I did all I could to hold myself calm and steady. It was not always a simple thing to do, but I had more success than I really expected. As you see, I did not go blind. And I have never allowed myself to worry about anything else that has happened since then, strong as the temptation is when I see the farm going to rack and ruin, with no one to do the work as it needs to be done. I mean to abide by my bargain."

I had never heard Matthew Bradford mention the name of God before, and I have never heard him mention it since, but I know what I need to know about his religion.

Reading, he told me, had been permitted him at intervals this spring, and he had gone through the three volumes of *Jean-Christophe.* I remember the surprise with which I heard him mention the book. Though he pronounced its title, and the name of its author, in the fashion of one who was quite ignorant of French, he had heartily enjoyed it.

"That is a world," he said, "about which I of course know nothing. But I found it very interesting to follow the young man through all his adventures. The strange thing is, that I felt at home. The people in the book must be real, for I have seen people like most of them here in Cornwall or in Waterbury."

At various times I have offered to read to him, but he generally prefers to talk. "I can read in the winter. I would rather talk when I have a chance to." The things he says are always reflective and never speculative. Full of serene curiosity as he is, he has been neither a reader

nor a traveler. His actual topics are his observations in Connecticut and particularly in Cornwall.

One day when I was driving with him to his favorite spring I asked him the name of a certain hill in the neighborhood. "I don't know," he said after a moment. "I ought to know, for I was a member of the committee which named all our hills a good many years ago. But I have forgotten. Perhaps it doesn't matter. They had got along without names so long that the names seem not to stick to them very tight in their old age—any more than they do to my memory." That same day, as we were passing a rough boulder which juts out over the Hollow Road, Matthew Bradford smiled. "I can tell you more about that rock than I can about the hill. The last wolf ever seen in Cornwall, so far as I know, was standing on the top of the rock when my father came by here. Not long after that, when I was still a small boy, I was hunting the cows and had to crawl under the rock to keep out of a terrible rain. I can remember yet how much afraid I was that the wolf was somewhere around. If he was, he liked me less than the rain. But, then, I have always found Cornwall

a safe place to live in. Probably it is safer now than it was when I was a boy, when it had twice as large a population as it has to-day. There are some, no doubt, who find it so safe that it is tiresome."

Thus, without discoursing formally upon the town's past, he manages to open up vistas into it, and to bind past and present together with vivid links. It is the same when he speaks of the men and women who have lived here. "Most of the stone walls in Cornwall," he told me, "were built by an Indian who was very expert in that art. He spent his life building them, and covered the whole town with his monuments." I am not sure whether my neighbor feels how ironical it is that an Indian should have marked the boundaries of the newcomers who had dispossessed his race, but I hesitate to doubt it; I know that the irony of the fact was communicated to me. Again Matthew Bradford said: "The Warwick men who used to own your house were all large, strong men with thick beards who liked the heaviest work best. It was said of them that if they had enough hard cider, they would undertake to move mountains; but they

never had enough, so the mountains stayed where they were." I remembered the enormous timbers in my barns and the flag-stones in my walks, and had a sense of dim giants tugging at them.

Matthew Bradford's observations, however, are not all in the heroic key. "You should have known old Mrs. Warwick, the mother of the last Warwick who lived in your house. She was not very devout and she had a sharp tongue. Once the minister went to call on her, as he called on every one in his parish. She liked the news of the congregation when she could get it, but she never went to church, because she had a poor opinion of that particular minister. When he told her that there had recently been a fire in the church, she said, 'I cal'late it didn't start in the pulpit.' He enjoyed the joke and told me about it."

With the same delight in the comedy of existence this kindly spectator has hit off for me most of our contemporaries in Cornwall. He is disillusioned without being bitter. I have never caught the note of scorn in his discourses. It is possibly for the reason that I am farm-bred that he admits me to considerable intimacy with

him, but he shows no signs of thinking often, as some of the farmers do, about the distinction between them and the summer residents. All such minor differences have long ceased to weigh with him, if they ever did. Of a certain pompous neighbor of ours Matthew Bradford once told me that the man reminded him of "a statue of Daniel Webster rolling itself around on castors." But this is nearer to wit than he frequently comes. Of another, who is extraordinarily dull and inarticulate, I heard my old friend say: "His wife may find his conversation interesting, but I find his silence the most interesting thing about him." For the most part, however, these comments upon the neighbors are simple narratives, of their births, marriages, children, goings and comings, accomplishments and qualities. "The man who works for me is a Doty. In Cornwall we say 'once a Doty, always a Doty.' The first members of the family came here with the original settlers nearly two hundred years ago; came as hired men. They have been hired men ever since. Now and then one of them shows promise or marries an unusually ambitious woman, and

it looks as if the spell would be broken. But so far it never has been. Sooner or later the Doty blood seems to tell, and the man turns out to be shiftless after all. The Doty women are sometimes better than the men. The unfortunate thing is that they almost always marry with their own kin or with others of the same stripe. Then their children are Dotys too, whatever their names. This man of mine started out very well, on his own account, and he certainly married an industrious woman. She has made it hard for him to be as much of a Doty as he might like to be, but if you will watch the son at work for half an hour you will see that the father has had his revenge."

I am so accustomed to seeing Cornwall partially through the eyes of my friend that I was shocked, I remember, the first time I realized that Cornwall also has eyes through which it looks at him. I stood talking with a former Cornwall man, who now lives in New Haven, when Matthew Bradford drove slowly by.

"That's an interesting old codger," my visitor said. "Quite a character. He had a good deal

of money once, but it slipped through his fingers. Some people around here wonder where it all went to."

Inwardly I winced at the insinuation that there may have been creditors whose claims were not considered, though I did not in the least believe it. I winced even more at the assumption that this wise and good man was merely another rustic type. At the same time I had to admit to myself that his antique dignity, his Roman stoicism, was far from being evident that day to the casual observer. His clothes were weather-beaten and characterless, his shoulders bent, his beard untended; his purple old hands shook a little as they slapped the reins over the sluggish horse that drew his mud-splashed buggy. This perfunctory exterior, indeed, is habitual with him and must have held at a distance many of those who supposed they knew him. Despite the eminence of his mind, he might possibly by some observers be estimated as merely one more vote in the town meeting. What pressure of life must have been called for to discipline him to this pitch of inconspicuousness!

My curiosity aroused, I cautiously inquired of

the other neighbor in whom I had once thought to find a Yankee of the old breed. But though he is both inquisitive and garrulous, he had nothing to tell me. "They say Matthew was a wild one in his time," he said, "but I never see him up to any mischief." I could believe that Matthew Bradford had been circumspect; I had to study him again to determine whether I could accept the legend of his gay youth. I thought I could. With a little imagination I could fill out his shrunken frame to the dimensions of a powerful youth, sinewy and lusty, who must have delighted in bodily activity and must have felt the sting of all his appetites.

Love, for instance, may well have tugged at him. I feel sure he attracted it. Nothing about him so clings to my memory as a thing he told me in this connection. I had stopped to call on him one bright September day and had found him sitting as usual with his gaze apparently upon his meadow. But he seemed to be brooding softly upon some unusual memory.

"A very singular thing happened yesterday. A woman whom I knew when I was a young man came all the way from Albany to visit me.

I hadn't met her for many years, since she was married and went away from Cornwall. She told me that her husband died some time ago and left her with a comfortable income and no obligations, so she is indulging in all the things she wants to do before she is too feeble to do them. One of them, she said, was to come back to Cornwall and talk over old times with me. 'If I were younger,' she told me, 'I might not have sense enough to visit you. But I am old enough now to know my own mind and come. I wouldn't die happy if I hadn't seen you again.' So here she was. She had dinner with me, though it wasn't much of a dinner, and stayed all afternoon. I don't know what either of us knew that we didn't tell each other. She is still very energetic, with all her faculties as fresh as ever, I thought, and very good company."

He sat silent for several moments, while I waited to see if there was more to his story.

"You will think it strange of me to say such a thing, but do you know, I believe that woman loved me. I had never dreamed of it."

Thinking later upon the episode, I was struck to find how natural it had seemed to me for

Matthew Bradford to say these words. He was as far beyond any mean fear of betraying his emotions as was the woman who had come upon her touching pilgrimage. But I could not help wondering whether, along with the kind memories which she had awakened in him, there was not also some stir of rebellion against his weakness and loneliness. He could hardly have become so rich and generous in his wisdom without building it upon the conquest of powerful passions. Are the wars between his passions and his wisdom, I asked myself, all ended?

I asked myself, but I ask no longer. This past summer when I went to Cornwall I found him gradually recovering from an illness which had been all but fatal. Barely able to sit erect, he sat in the sun, his eyes only now and then lifted to the meadow and swamp. His voice was the same as ever, but his words were very few. I congratulated him upon his recovery. He looked at me as if I had said some childish thing.

"Yes, the doctor did an excellent job of it, I believe, and Mrs. Doty is praised by every one for her devotion as a nurse. But I find it very hard to forgive them. They had a chance to

let me die and they did not let me. Now I must wait for another winter."

Almost at once he turned the conversation to casual matters, but for a minute I had seen the depth of his weariness and his rebellion. In that moment he was not the gentle, wise old man I have ordinarily known. He was a man whose soul, in irons, cried out against its dreadful bondage. Whatever was too soft, too diffused, in the picture which I had drawn of him for myself was corrected. I cannot think of him now without remembering that day when he, as it were, took the pencil out of my hand and drew around my picture that swift, biting outline which fixes it forever in my memory.

SMITH IN SEARCH OF A MAJORITY

MEN like Smith must be considered in a democracy.

I never knew what town or country bred him and lent him to Manhattan, where during our entire acquaintance he carried on his singular researches. He was not, I now guess, from New England, since he lacked any instinct whatever, when he suddenly discovered he had grown too confidential, to draw an iron curtain of reserve down over his face with the awkward haste of a true Yankee. Neither had he the tempered insolence of a New Yorker nor the archaic touches of speech and manner which might have assigned him to the older South. Hardly expansive enough to have come from the Far West, hardly energetic enough to have been born in the Mississippi valley, he possibly sprang—if that is not too violent a term for Smith—from some such characterless region as I have always imag-

ined to exist between the Hudson and the Great Lakes. But no matter what the mere locality of his origin, he had, before I met him, shaken its peculiar dust from his feet in his quest for a moral or intellectual neighborhood where he could feel unmistakably at home.

That he could not find this congenial neighborhood was his grief and, indeed, his tragedy. Yet his associates, most of them, either understood his plight as comic or else did not understand it at all. I remember that I was bored with him before I began to be interested. And before I began to be bored, I could barely remember him at all from one meeting to another. Indeed, the first definite item of my recollection is not a thing Smith did or said, but a remark I heard addressed to him.

I was sitting in the lounge of Livingston Hall, not quite sure how to spend the evening, when a robust voice behind me said:

"Smith, the trouble with you is that every wind of doctrine blows you over. And then when you get up again, you are pointed the wrong way."

Turning, I saw Smith hunched eagerly on the edge of a chair into which probably any other

man in the university would have sunk down, relaxed, though disputative. His large, serious face, larger and more serious than usual, was tormented in its effort to bring forth some answer which should be sufficient to meet what he evidently regarded as a painful accusation. I remember thinking, while he struggled, that so impressive a brow and chin as he had ought to go with a more impressive nose and mouth.

"No," he said, "it isn't that. I can stand all the winds that blow. What worries me is that I can't find any great causes any more."

"Great causes! Great God! You have a fresh cause every week. You can make two grow where only one ever grew before. I keep thinking that you have found the last one on earth, and then you turn up another. It's lucky for you that you can never stick to any one of them long. If you did, you'd soon have so many on your back you couldn't budge."

I knew Powell, Smith's companion, well enough to know that he was amusing himself, but I could see that Smith was in dead earnest and was suffering. He entered upon some explanation which I have quite forgotten, except

that it interested me in him as an odd creature who was as lost even in the university as an owl might be in the most glorious sunshine.

A few days later I learned all I ever knew of Smith's earlier career. Powell, hailing me as I passed, introduced me in his impudent way.

"Do you know Smith? He is a man to watch. He started out to be a missionary, with a slogan. It was 'The evangelization of the world in this generation.' But he found he couldn't stand the evangelists. So he turned himself into a patriot and got a new slogan. It was 'America for the Americans.' But poor Smith found he couldn't stand the Americans. So he's on the loose again. If you have a cause or a slogan to spare, tell Smith about it and save a soul."

Though Smith was plainly worried at the caricature which Powell had drawn, I then suspected, and now feel sure, that it was correct in its principal outlines. With a character cut so obviously from one piece as his was, he must have had the sort of past which the troubles of his maturity suggested. The picture of his youth which I have formed seems to me, as I look back, to have constructed itself without any deliberate effort on

my part. It shows Smith at fifteen or sixteen, his face as large and as serious as it was ever to be, listening in a square, bare church to the plangent tones of some missionary returned from the foreign field with news of the dreadful state of the heathen to whom no one had brought the light. How could the boy not thrill to the plea? Generous as became his age, he longed to give some part of his abundance to those who lacked it. Adventurous, also, he dreamed of journeying to distant regions, in the face of picturesque hardships, scattering the truth among the children of error. With what distress, then, he must have grown aware of the doubts which rose in him as he reflected further! He could perhaps overcome his distaste for the too single-minded missionaries whom he met, he could even stomach the reformed heathen or the unmassacred Armenians who were exhibited in his church as proofs that the great cause was marching on; but sooner or later Smith had to learn something about the dark religions which the true faith was to supplant, and then he had gradually to realize, whatever his hesitation and his sense of apostacy, that the issue was not so clear as he had thought. He could not be sure

that it was the duty of all devout men to labor to bring the world into one fold. He could not be sure that the alien breeds would be better off within the gospel law. He could not be sure but that he rather sympathized with the heathen.

Poor Smith indeed! Some instinct which he could no more control than the beating of his heart made him a dissenter from the first majority in which he found himself.

Nor was it better with him when he turned to patriotism for a cause which might enlist his devotion. Imagine him, when a mere child, reading about the peremptory way the early settlers had with the Indians. As a patriot he would have heard that he must rejoice over the fate of the aborigines, but as a person he would discover that he could not. There could occur to him such rudimentary thoughts as that the red men had been first on the ground or that the white men had not always been satisfied with defending themselves. Similarly, Smith might well have had difficulty with the Revolution. For instance, there were the loyalists, some of them good enough men and women, whose chief offense lay in their belonging to what was, virtually, a minority. I

suspect that the adolescent Smith, by reason of his fatal weakness, winced at hearing how many of these cattle were told to go to Halifax and leave their goods behind in the new republic. So, doubtless, with all sorts of historical matters and later with many contemporary events: Smith could not do his patriotic duty and believe that majorities are always right, even American majorities. He was more than dubious about the wars with Mexico and with Spain. Regarding the Civil War he could never quite get it out of his head that the Confederate States had been invaded. And he was forever worrying that same head, as his large, serious face betrayed, over the impetuous native customs of tarring and feathering, of riding by night with masks, of lynching on any reasonably adequate occasion.

This trait of character in Smith had led him, before the days of our intimacy, to set about his remarkable monograph on the history of American minorities. The book is so well known that I need not describe it, but I should like to correct one mistake which has crept into the accepted opinion concerning it. That mistake is the notion that it was written with delight, or out of

any desire to vex the heirs of the various majorities which so often fare badly in the record.

Powell, I remember, voiced the accepted opinion as soon as the book was published. This was at breakfast at the commons the first time he saw Smith after reading his history.

"All I object to in your work is the title. You should have called it the annals of the steam roller in a democratic country. But why do you have a passion for the worms who have been run over? They had a lot of fun being in the minority. So have you, writing about them."

Smith's protests had no effect upon Powell, who merely laughed as they grew more earnest. When he had left the table, Smith tried to explain himself to me.

"I didn't enjoy writing it. Most of the time I hated it. I think it is perverse always to side with the defeated. If I am perverse in that way now and then, it isn't because I approve of the attitude. It's because I can't help it. Majorities ought to rule, I know. Only, I wish minorities didn't always have such good arguments on their side."

I said something flat about seeing the better,

but choosing the worse, antagonist in a controversy. Smith sighed. At the time I had not realized how sensitive he was to platitudes, how they hurt him when he encountered them. The more I think about his strange case, the more I come to believe that it was the catchwords of majorities which turned him against them. He couldn't stand their cant. Minorities, of course, have their cant phrases, too, but they naturally make less noise in the world than the others. The noise, the noisy reiteration, was too much for Smith. For this reason he had become a historian of minorities more or less in spite of himself, at the very time when he was looking for some majority which should be overwhelming enough to sweep him away.

What he might have done next there is now no chance of knowing, for the war came within a few weeks after his book was published, and deranged his plans, as it deranged those of many less divided spirits. Without question he had what were for him a few glorious hours and days during the late July and early August of that fateful year. Being a historian of a sort did not keep him, as it did not keep historians of many

sorts, from falling into the trap which rumor then laid, and from, consequently, looking upon the European conflict as a melodrama so pure that the villain was all black and the hero all white and the victims all pitiful. Thus viewing the matter, Smith had his hour and day. His large, serious face shone with a light I have never seen on any other. He was Perceval, and he saw his Grail.

I remember a walk I had with him during this heyday, along the Drive late at night, under a bland moon which touched the Hudson so luminously that the New Jersey shore was only a dim blaze. After a sultry twilight the wind had begun to stir and had broken the fiery grip which the heat had had upon the city since noon. But for Smith, so far as I could see, the fierce sun had meant nothing, any more than the change to a comfortable midnight. By comparison with the fire within him, the sun was a pale star and the moon a mere ornament in the sky.

"Germany can't win. She will raise enemies faster than she can beat them, no matter how ready she may be. All Europe will join against her. She mustn't win. If she should by any

miracle get through to Paris and then to London, we shall have to enter the war. What will there be left to live for if we don't? This isn't an international affair only. It's a cosmic issue. Justice itself is fighting. It has simply got to be victorious. Nothing else on earth is important now. It would be better for half the men alive to die than for justice to die."

For one malicious moment I was tempted to say, "Justice lost, all is lost," or to remind Smith how much favor the gods have shown strong battalions in their time; but I respected his ardor, feeling it would be too cruel to prick him with a catchword at such a moment. I wish, however, I had done it, for I might have caused him less pain than he suffered when the same thing was done, quite ruthlessly, by Powell only a few days afterward.

Smith, it seems, with a promptness worthy of H. G. Wells, had begun an article on the moral aspects of the war which was to set forth the case for justice as fully as he felt that it deserved. Talking about it one evening in Livingston Hall, he had the mishap to bore Powell, and the downfall of the enthusiast began.

"That's right, Smith, that's right. Tell the world how to whip the mad dog of Europe back to his kennel. Don't forget to put in something about the Russian bear and its brooding soul. Don't forget the British lion and its grim tenacity. And don't, please don't, forget the Gallic cock and his beautiful eyes. Get up a hue and cry. Yell 'Stop, thief!' Set none but majorities on guard to-night."

I could see that Smith felt the poison in the sting from the first moment. Very likely the bacillus of perversity had already begun to work in his blood while he was writing his article. But this was more deadly, as it was more dramatic. Things painful to see appeared in his eyes. His lips lost their customary lines. His cheeks twitched. Any answer which, at the first vexed instant, might have been born within him died weakly before it reached his tongue. He sat still only long enough, I suppose, to command his legs, and then got up and walked away without a syllable.

Powell has always maintained that I am fanciful in my estimate of the things his insolence did to poor Smith, but I am willing to let the result

speak for itself. What can that result point to if not to some toxic perturbation which rapidly went on inside him, confirming him in the old malady from which for a little interval he had seemed about to recover? Dire agonies must have racked him in the relapse. How that large, serious face must have pored over the news for evidences which might bring back his momentary exaltation! How it must have stared into the dark at night, how haggard it must have been at how many dawns! After so long Smith had found a cause to which he could give his whole passion, though a majority shared it with him. And now he had begun to feel that this cause, too, was another phantom.

At any rate, he did not go on deceiving himself. When I saw him again, he had got back his habit of questioning universal statements, much distress as it might cause him. I ran upon him and Powell, horns locked, debating whether France were immaculate, in view of its Russian policy, and whether England were completely disinterested, in spite of its proximity to Belgium. This was the first time, it happened, that I became aware of the clouds which were shortly to

threaten neutrals even so far away from the struggle as in an American university. In the group of other men who had gathered around the two debaters I saw that at least half had sour looks for Smith. He himself had not perceived it, sensitive as he generally was to such strained atmospheres, but was arguing as freely as he had always been used to doing. Powell, to give him full credit, stuck to his arguments, without any of the personal thrusts in which he ordinarily delighted. It was a bystander, I think Meserve, who brought the consequences of Smith's weakness home to me, and possibly to Smith.

"Hell!" he remarked loudly to the group, "his name must be Schmidt. Why isn't he with the Death's Head hussars, where he belongs?"

On this occasion Smith was not so taken aback as he had been at Powell's recent gibe, and protested, truly enough, that he was no German and had, indeed, never liked the race. But his protests conspicuously failed to interest the listeners, whom I could see making up their minds with the finality which men never achieve except when they have only partial testimony and are rendering the wrong verdict. The more the criminal de-

fended his position, the guiltier the jury evidently thought he was.

Though I had begun to feel concerned for Smith, I did not then foresee what an ugly road he had ahead; nor does it seem credible, as I now review the whole affair, that he could have been involved so unhappily as he was thereafter for no offense worse than his instinct for looking on both sides of any shield. Before I could realize it, the word had gone round that he was pro-German, already a disturbing charge. He was mystified, and doubled his efforts to make his position clear. Of course he only made it more suspected. Decent men were particularly polite to him; the others were brusk at best. He must have noticed that talk about the war flagged a little whenever he drew near the talkers. And there was no chance that the trouble could blow over, since the popular animosity toward Germany grew very fast and since Smith would not practise the discretion which could have saved him. Without being at all thick-skinned, he was extremely steadfast in all that concerned his opinions. At the same time he could not get the pleasure that some men might have got out of being a kind of martyr.

He winced at every new sign of his increasing ostracism. I know that he felt it the heaviest burden of his predicament that he was assumed by the avowed pro-Germans in the university to be one of them and was by them received with open arms which he detested.

Well, his outward fortunes differed little from the outward fortunes of other men who could not in those unanimous days run with the great pack. Others than Smith suffered in their efforts to explain the eloquent Presidential phrases of which it was the doomed fate to mean such dissimilar things to friends and enemies. Others than Smith suffered because they could neither swallow all the Allied propaganda nor approve the immortal stupidity of the Central powers. But in Smith's case there was the peculiar tragedy that he seems almost to have been created to be a natural victim of these circumstances. Euripides himself could not have found a more tormenting tragic weakness than this of the man who with a passion for high, clear causes united a persistent instinct to dissent from them. Euripides himself could not have invented a more exacting test for such a man than this, in which, dubious as Ham-

let, he was forced to take sides or to appear among his fellows as a partizan of the very evils which he most hated.

I contend that Smith was as much a victim of the Lusitania as any innocent passenger who sank with the ship. The outrage presented him with the most intense dilemma which had yet arisen in the course of the war. By all that was humane in his nature he was forced to hate and curse the crime or blunder, whatever it was. By all that was reasonable in him he was forced to point out that not all, but only some, of the Germans were responsible for the deed, and that there were plenty of persons among the Allied nations who would have heard the news complacently had the Lusitania flown the German flag. But in the uprush of anger which followed the incident, no one who stormed about it with Smith or in his presence took any notice of his humanity. He was assumed to be an unblushing apologist of the deed and was abused or overlooked accordingly. Even Powell, losing for a few days his cynical detachment, told Smith he might as well have sinned against the Holy Ghost. This was the end of Smith's regular companionship with

the men who had known him in Livingston Hall and had long laughed at his oscillations between pro and con. Among such partizans he was, at best, a laughing-stock. His unhappy status more than anything else, I suppose, influenced him to leave the university that spring and to take a position elsewhere beyond the reach of any certain knowledge I could ever get of him later. How much distress this exile caused him I do not know. Yet I am sure that these external things were unimportant to him as compared with the raging conflict which went on inside his mind. There on the one hand was a majority which had for a time aroused his uttermost passion and then had turned it to a desperate satiety. There, on the other hand, was a minority which through some wry instinct in him had tempted him and then had shocked him beyond forgiveness. Between them how he must have been torn. The heat of this battle took the temper out of him, as fire takes the temper out of steel.

Perhaps he found peace subsequently, but I doubt it. Dispositions like his are not made for peace. The Austrian moves to end the war, the American entry into it, the Russian revolutions,

the atrocities of espionage and propaganda, the flaming raptures of the armistice, the icy anti-climax of Versailles—I would rather not think of the effects these things had upon him. Thinking of them as quietly as I can, however, I nevertheless rejoice that he had the luck to be carried off by the epidemic of influenza which spread over the world as a tangible symptom of the graver epidemic which had invaded it. Powell summed the matter up in a hard, true comment.

"Poor Smith! At last he has joined the great majority. I doubt that there was any other for him."

THE SCHOLAR

THOUGH I have seen the Scholar almost every day of her brief life, and though she is never long absent from my thoughts, I know her best by the memory of certain exquisite moments which lie at the heart of my knowledge of her. One of these moments came and went when she was seven, when she danced for me on the clipped grass under a bent apple-tree in a late spring. The day was as warm as July, but the blossoms had not yet all fallen, and the sun lay upon them that afternoon with the unseasonable, languid grace of summer. The Scholar had made her own costume for the dance, a single garment fashioned with awkward fingers from a square of corn-colored muslin, with a jagged hole in the center through which she thrust her golden head, and with the edges cut in deep scallops to match, as she imagined, the rays of sunshine. Perhaps it was only because I had just come a long and dusty

way from the city; perhaps it was because the air of the hills was wine and the apple-blossoms were spice; perhaps it was because my eyes had not rested upon her for hours running into days. Whatever it was, she became for me in that moment the visible symbol of joy, the image of youth and beauty, tiptoe for an instant on the solid earth between flight and flight.

I cannot say that in her motions she was genuinely graceful. The steps of her dance were far from intricate and were even then occasionally confused. Often her young feet stumbled or hesitated, obedient to no unbroken rhythm. But when, forgetful of her pattern, she broke into a mad scamper across her turfed floor, arms wide and gay garment flying; or when, at the end of a measure, she fell into one of the momentary poses which she seemed unable to make anything but graceful—then I asked myself where but in Tanagra had any coroplast ever poised a body upon such slim feet, built so pure and strong a back, set a head so proudly upon such proud shoulders? Though her blue eyes and her pink cheeks, her white skin and her sunny hair might be of another age, she was, as I saw her, classic

and perennial, a picture fixed forever in my deeper consciousness.

There is another moment no less memorable. At six she was taking a long railway journey with me, half across the continent. All afternoon we had sat reading the story of the Odyssey, looking up from time to time to survey the wintry landscape, the gashed hillsides of Pennsylvania. She had but the least interest in the factories which I pointed out to her, and stared coldly at the grim cities through which we passed. To these she infinitely preferred the adventures of that much-enduring Greek, above all in the cave of the Cyclops and, for some strange reason, upon the beach with Nausicaa. The childhood of mankind surrounded us as she took in with unmoved eyes the episodes of Cyclopean brutality and of Odyssean revenge, as she heard with glowing eyes how Nausicaa had gone with her maids to wash their brilliant raiment on the seashore and there had encountered the wandering king of Ithaca toward whom she entertained such candid plans. What all this meant to the Scholar of course she could not tell me, and I could not guess, but it held her with hardly an interval of rest-

lessness. Then came the dinner hour. It is this I particularly remember. She who had been the wandering companion of Odysseus and of Nausicaa now suddenly returned. As we sat at our unsteady table she assumed the airs of a grown woman, solicitous about the conduct of the meal, plainly quite unaware of the delighted glances turned upon her by the other passengers. Without an effort she had slipped from the Mediterranean of Homer to her own century and country, into this pretty make-believe of common life. Half an hour later she was neither adventurer nor hostess; she was a child again, sleepy and yet fighting against the thought and fact of bed.

The Scholar is a perpetual proof that children do have characters, and have them from the cradle. When the merest baby she kept the world always at a wary distance unless she wanted it to come closer. As soon as she could sit at all, she sat erect, leaning upon no bosom whatsoever. Not until she was a year and a half old, and burning with the fever of a childish illness on another journey, did she relax utterly and go to sleep in my arms; even then she started up the moment she was awake again. Kinsmen and kinswomen

who admired her beauty and tried to smother her with their caresses found her cool even when she was compliant. Strangers anxious to make up to her were always a little baffled by her sober carriage and her scrutinizing eyes. Once when I took her, at five, to a gathering of my clan, she was so detached and silent that I did what I could to urge her to more friendliness. "They all say what a big girl I am," she told me. "They talk about me when I am there." At home she had not been accustomed to hear comments upon her passed over her head. Yet it was less the custom of her household than her native dignity that made her thus dislike to be the topic while she was within hearing. That dignity has never faltered during her eight years. She may respond to justice or melt to tenderness, but she is always a distinct and separate person, no toy to be played with, no instrument to be played upon.

This is not to say that she is habitually calm. Self-possessed for the most part, she has moods of the fieriest rebellion. With a pride like hers goes a will so stubborn that she often suffers from it and gives pain to all around her. She cannot be readily diverted from her desires. When these

are, or seem, improper and are forbidden her, she flies into rages which are not pleasant to look upon. She has an edged tongue which can be singularly cruel for its age. Too proud and too shrewd to resort to violence, she resorts to a hurt or angry silence which may last beyond all expectations and from which she can be distracted only by some novel form of entertainment or by a just and reasonable appeal. To anger she has always been adamant. The few who have ventured upon it with her have found themselves baffled utterly. The few times when she has been coerced have never been victories for the victors, who have had to realize that her will was absolutely untouched. It is impossible to watch her as I have watched her without dreading to think about the difficulties into which her willful temper will carry her.

Yet to whatever civilized reasons are brought to her in her rages she answers with a pathetic promptness. With other children she accepts without question, and apparently with slight effort, the code which says that all should take turns at pleasure. Her will is rarely obstinate except when it is joined with a reasoned sense of what is due her. If she whines or sulks, as for an un-

lovely period she did, she does it without abandon or entire conviction. Nothing about her has been more moving than the fight she has made for the past two years to conquer her stormy moods. The petulant whine has almost disappeared from her armory of protest. When overcome by her fury she now invariably takes flight and hides herself till the worst tumult is over, unwilling to be seen at what she knows is this disadvantage. After a recent quarrel with her nurse, in which the Scholar was plainly in the wrong, she tried to explain her actions to me.

"I don't want to be angry. Something makes me be. Every time I am I think I won't ever be again, and then it happens just the same. It feels as if it were here somewhere," and she pressed her soft fist against her breast. "You are angry lots of times. Don't you know how it feels?"

Of the Scholar's intellectual traits I have noticed most her memory and her balanced curiosity. The first exhibited itself while she was still unstable in her gait, she was so young. Having taken a fancy to a small handbook of birds which lay about the house, she began to ask what each

bird was and learned the names with eager rapidity. On her second birthday I went with her through the handbook and found that she knew instantly at least a hundred, though she was hard put to it to pronounce the words for some of them, such as the painted junco, the scarlet tanager, the dickcissel. Even among the multitudinous warblers she was either accurate or said she did not know, and she distinguished at a glance those close cousins the night hawk and the whip-poor-will. By the next summer, it is true, she had forgotten all of them, but then she took up the flowers in the neighborhood and shortly learned as many names as I knew, not from pictures merely but from the flowers themselves.

Reading, however, interrupted these scientific studies. When she was four she made the discovery that there was an art by which she could herself get at the universe surrounding her in books which at times she could find no one to read aloud. Doubtless she was not so explicit in her desire as I make out, but at least she did not stop till within a few months she had taught herself, or had teased others to teach her, to read a great deal more than she could understand. By her

sixth year she had read a small library of the most varied kinds of literature, some of them oddly inappropriate to her age. At present she keeps me, as her adviser, busy with selection. Not willing to advise her too precisely, I have tried to give her a range limited only by her comprehension, but as to this I am constantly at loss. She has developed an amazing speed, reading a page of fiction as even most adults read a paragraph, a chapter as most read a page. Nor is she entirely absorbed in fiction. She reads widely in her encyclopedia, and is forever bringing remote subjects into her conversation with me.

Chiefly, I think, she is interested in the habits of animals, but she is curious about plants and maps, about chemistry and handicrafts, notably about ships and stars. Walking with me in the woods, along the docks, through streets and markets, she asks endless questions about all she sees. And she does not stop with things seen. She poses childish questions in ethics, having outgrown an earlier impression that every deed is simply good or bad. Bred in no theology, she is inquisitive about God and the possibility of a future life. She lately told me that she would

like to die to find out the truth concerning heaven; but on second thought she said she believed she would not, because no one seemed to know much about it anyway, and possibly it would not be very pleasant, so it would be better to stay where she was in a world of which she could feel more certain. On the whole, I think her instinct for speculation is equal to her knack at learning. She inquires about meanings and processes no less than about facts. Perhaps from never being denied any information for which she asks, she never shows a willingness to put up with superficial answers, but presses on till she is thoroughly satisfied. Often, of course, she strains my ingenuity by demanding that I explain problems such as how we measure and weigh the moon or why evil men are not always punished—problems which can hardly be translated into terms which she understands, even if they can be explained at all. In this I have yet to catch her in a failure in logic. At the same time, she now and then has flashes of perception which make me jump.

Do I give the impression that the Scholar is a pedant or a prig? I do not mean to. She can play with her dolls as intently as any girl her age

and spends a great deal of time sewing for them and dressing them. A muscular child, she is unusually expert on the trapeze, and can climb a rope, turn a handspring, drive a nail, or shoot an arrow competently. Without much gift for drawing or modeling, she is dexterous with her hands at most practical tasks, such as cooking or carpentry. Of sports I think she likes swimming best, though she was timorous about the water till last year and still does not venture far beyond her depth. Dancing, too, she likes, especially if she is free to invent her own pattern. And in all games, apparently, her pleasure is in proportion to the chance they afford her to create new schemes or to modify old ones.

Nothing, however, outside her school holds her interest so steadily as planning and acting plays, one of which she presents each evening before bed-time. Here all her aptitudes unite and have free rein. Her reading helps her to find plots and characters, whether in the Bible or in the comic strips. Her will and her astuteness enable her to persuade her younger sisters to work under her direction. She plans the dances and assigns the songs, always a part of the performance. Above

all, she is adroit in designing costumes, out of even the least professional materials. By any exigent standard the plays are not good plays. They drag along with the tempo of amateurs who have eternity before them. They creak, they falter, they stop while the actors wrangle over lines and action. Something, however, emerges from each one, some evidence of a fancy realizing itself, of an idea given flesh and blood, of a reflection turned into action. No mere dreamer, despite her books, the Scholar does not stop with thinking. She gives shape and color to all her conceptions, using for that purpose the most varied and tangible art she knows.

Doubtless I say of her no more than that she lives, within the boundary of her capacities, a full life, which speculation expands and imagination transmutes. Doubtless, also, I see her sadly from without and mistake the drama of which, like every human being, she feels herself to be the center. Yet certain strings in me so vibrate to certain of her moods and deeds that I have to trust the emotions and judgments which they waken. Recognizing that kinship, however, I dare not presume upon it. It helps me to un-

derstand her fierce will, her hot rebellions, her tireless quest for knowledge, her restive desire always to be acting through some form of art; but it can go no further. There is still the mystery of her golden beauty, the marvel of her flame-like youth setting out upon the paths of a world which will eventually dim it. Is she cool now? Fevers will run through her. Is she fiery now? Winter will touch her sooner or later. In those days I can be of no avail, great though my longing may be. Something new has been fashioned out of the stuff which makes the race, yet it can at best only slightly vary an ancient process. Powerless even now in all that essentially concerns the Scholar, I watch the process working with her. This delicate clay, caught up by what hands for what purposes, advances in what must seem a tentative direction toward what must be an unguessed fate. As I hang dumbly over the spectacle, the Pities and the Ironies come from the wings of the theater and stand beside her where she, unaware of them, plays her ingenuous part. The Ironies, with hard eyes, smile at the long plans they see her laying and tell each other that such plans are brief and brittle. The Pities, with

kind eyes, weep to see her plans so long, for they too know how soon they will be broken. And this, no doubt, is as much as may be expected of life for any man's daughter: that now and then the Pities and the Ironies, their glances meeting above her head, may agree concerning her.

THE GIPSY

THE face of the Gipsy is that of a shy elf caught stepping suddenly out of a thicket into a patch of sunlight. Even the simplest among the elves, no doubt, have something furtive about their eyes, but the Gipsy's, easily startled as they are, have never the slightest squint of calculation. They open so wide with wonder or joy that they dwarf her small, dark face with its pixy nose and pointed chin, and its swift changes from mood to mood. Her outward elvishness, indeed, is largely in her face. Tall enough to stand almost a head above her playmates, she moves among them with more strength than agility. The burden of her height has made her somewhat stiff in gait and gesture. When she runs she may fall down with the least excuse. When she courtesies she can hardly master her disobedient knees. Only her hands are as deft as her face promises. They are the hands of a poet equally ready with the pencil or the sword,

strong as dainty vises, quick and sure as a humming-bird among its flowers. In a tree, drawing herself up from crotch to bough, she scrambles like a laughing monkey. In the nursery, though she may knock over her chair in trying to sit down to some task that interests her, she nevertheless can thread a needle while hardly looking at it or model some absurd creature out of clay with subtle fingers.

Her height has been a burden to her in more than gait and gesture. It tends to lead all who know her into forgetting that she is still but six and into expecting that she will bear herself in her little crises as if babyhood were further behind her than it is. From this arise, I know, those prodigious variations on the surface of her temper which belie the real steadiness of her spirit. Like a thoroughbred urged too far and fast, she keeps up the pace demanded till her last ounce of stamina is gone, and then collapses, plunging into tears and utter desperation. At such moments it is vain to try to succor her with too much sympathy. She lets herself drift on that soft tide; she abandons herself to comfort and stifles herself with pity. Such fare is innutritive to chil-

dren like the Gipsy. Left alone, however, she soon ceases to think about herself, finds her attention straying to the varied world in which she eagerly exists, and recovers as rapidly as she collapsed. How, then, the sun comes up in her countenance without an intervening, hesitating dawn! Impudence succeeds despair as if despair had never been. A tender pink glows through the clear brown of her cheeks. Her great eyes sparkle like windows, somber before, in which a lamp has been set while the wayfarer stared disconsolately at them.

Last summer I took the Gipsy with me to walk through the deserted wilderness which lies between my house and a neighbor's two miles away. We followed an old road, now disused and given over to encroaching birch and alder, till it vanished in a bog, struck across a meadow which hopeful haymakers cleared two or three generations ago, surveyed the ruins of a tumbled barn which we found there, tasted the green apples on a gnarled tree beyond it, chased a woodchuck into his hole and listened to a woodthrush in a covert, gathered and discarded armfuls of flowers, studied a pine which had fallen clutching a boulder

in its roots, and discovered that we had lost our bearings. At most the distance was not great and we were in no danger, but it was growing late and the question was whether we could reach the neighbor's house without much uncomfortable floundering through the fern-grown morass. Perhaps, remembering the tireless way in which the child had been threading our twisted path, I forgot how long we had actually wandered. Perhaps, looking for the shortest route, I failed to realize how the briars whipped her and the muck dragged her down. At any rate, she suddenly fell into terror and cried out that she could walk no more. When I took her on my back, she almost throttled me with her tense arms. I could feel her heart beating against my shoulder. Her sobs shook her to her hands and feet. Feeling obliged to press on for fear the dark would catch us and keep us in the woods all night, I could not stop to comfort her. Before long she relaxed again and clung to me like a sleepy cat. A wholly different mood rose from the inarticulate depths within her. And when, in time, I came upon a road we knew, she slipped to the ground and went skipping ahead of me, chattering her ac-

customed whimsies without a sign that she remembered the temporary mishap.

Merely to repeat a few, or many, of her gay, darting comments would not half reveal the elvish quality of her mind. Charmingly illiterate, for she had not been taught nor greatly desired to be taught to read, she seizes upon her world directly, with no help from literature. Though she is utterly innocent of reserves, I cannot always follow her, she runs forward with such fantastic speed. In nearly one breath she once told me that she would marry me when she was grown and then that she would see me comfortably buried when I died. Again, arguing about the old problem of the hen and the egg, she declared that the egg could not have been first because the first chick would have needed a nurse to take care of it when it was small. On another startling occasion, having been warned against a scrap of rough speech she had heard on the street, she burst out with the opinion that the wickedest thing a person could do would be to tell God to go to hell. All that the Gipsy thinks or does seems to spring from instantaneous flashes of emotion. She never deliberately reflects, never sulks, and never hugs a

grievance. Whatever vexes her comes up out of her like a bubble, breaks into words or actions, and leaves her sweet-spirited. So sensitive that she can be almost paralyzed by a disapproving look, she melts absolutely at the first touch of kindness, plunges in and out a storm of tears, and glitters with joy at reconciliation. She demonstrates her affections with abandon, suddenly springing with fierce embraces upon those who take her fancy. She is improvident with her treasures, tending to live always in the day which is passing, without too much consideration for remoter tomorrows. She is both untidy and radiant.

Nevertheless, she has a powerful strain of courage and a contented sense of peace. Bent upon learning to swim, she has overcome a panic fear of water; or rather, she has persisted in spite of it, at a cost which I hate to estimate. Day after day, during the season, she marches shrinking yet resolute into the lake in her scarlet suit, shivers away from her splashing companions, and practices her awkward, violent strokes. She trembles, she strangles, she learns very slowly, but she protests when she is told her time is up and returns

on the next possible occasion. Nor does she show any sign of resentment that others of her own age are more at home in the water than she. Envy is an emotion wholly alien to her. This, I think, springs from that inner stability which is as much a part of her nature as her ardent susceptibility. I remember watching her once through the door of the nursery, myself unseen, while she played there alone. She who is capable of being a little tempest of energy with her sisters, moved softly among the toys, now humming a sweet, monotonous tune, now putting her dolls to bed and crooning over them, now standing at the window and scanning the passerby with bright, curious eyes, now crouched above a clumsy drawing while the red tip of her tongue imitated the movements of her hand. Seeing me, at last, she spoke dreamily: "I like it when there is nobody here. It is so quiet." But the next instant she flung herself upon me with a rush and demanded that I take her into the garden and turn a rope for her to jump.

The Gipsy is a tomboy who is very shy. When first she went to school she found herself in a group of children who had all been together the

year before, and for a time she did not know how to win a place among them. If I accompanied her in the morning she would try to keep me with her, inventing transparent little reasons why I should stay. I must see the work she had done the day before, must look again at all the paraphernalia in the room, must wait to hear the singing or watch the dancing. To leave was to loosen myself from her cold, restraining fingers. Left behind, her teacher told me, the Gipsy would go about her tasks alone, not seeming to mind her isolation yet constantly attentive to what was going on. I remember I visited her once during her class's period of outdoor play. Because I was present, she obviously wanted to do what all the other children were doing, but she could not quite give herself to the games, not being, I imagined, quite sure that the others wanted her. She would make sudden, tentative movements, and then check herself. She would stand a little to one side, her shining eyes signaling to me that I must take note of these delightful happenings. She was intensely proud to be a member of the group, I could discern, and half afraid I would not understand that she was. I thought of another

time when, in the country, talking with guests at tea on the lawn, I had become aware of the Gipsy under a syringa bush, squatting almost as close to the ground as a partridge, as shy and as alert, listening to our conversation. Without any disposition to intrude, she had still been attracted, and had stayed there, I do not know how long, a brown mouse in a corner, innocently peeping. It was as much in character as her restless industry, at other times, in flinging stones into the water or hunting moss to build fairy houses.

Because, though talkative enough, the Gipsy is essentially inarticulate, I do not always trust my judgments of her. It is as if she were a creature of some world which had no language, only actions, and only actions which were simple and direct; and as if, also, she had strayed into a world full of a complicated language, hard to learn, and could not feel entirely at home. No wonder she has never discovered how to speak conventionally or prudently, how to adapt her tongue to worldly uses. She speaks as directly as she acts, with quaint consequences. But her actions seem less strange, because they are grounded in a dainty integrity common to both worlds. She

responds always in the same fashion to the same stimulus. I can guess almost to a second when, after a flash of mad rebellion, she will swiftly surrender and hold out peace-making hands. What I cannot guess is what goes on behind her silences, what friction she endures, what hidden joys she takes, what verdicts she renders in her quick, gentle mind.

I think I come nearest to catching true glimpses of her when she recites the poem which seems to fascinate her most, a ballad from her native world. She lisps a little as she speaks the lines. She hurries over them, she stumbles in her excitement. Her thin body twists, her hands clutching at her dress. But her gipsy-dark face glows with a steady rapture, as if she were recalling some far, dear existence.

"There were three gipsies came to the door,
And downstairs ran this lady-O.
One sang high and one sang low
And one sang Bonny Bonny Biscay-O.

"Then she put off her silken gown
And put on hose of leather-O.
With ragged ragged rags about her back
She's off with the raggle-taggle gipsies-O."

Thus far the Gipsy goes softly, rising to a touch of triumph when the lady takes her leave. She seems to be smiling at the lady's lord when he comes home and finds his wife gone; she laughs at him while he searches for the wanderer "through woods and copses-O"; she gathers herself together dramatically when the search is ended.

" 'What makes you leave your house and land?
What makes you leave your money-O?
What makes you leave your new-wedded lord
To go with the raggle-taggle gipsies-O?'

" 'What care I for my house and land?
What care I for my money-O?
What care I for my new-wedded lord?
I'm off with the raggle-taggle gipsies-O.' "

How exultantly, then, the Gipsy concludes the narrative, with its bold decision!

" 'Last night you slept in a goose-feather bed
With the sheet turned back so bravely-O.
Tonight you will sleep in a cold, open field
Along with the raggle-taggle gipsies-O.'

" 'What care I for your goose-feather bed
With the sheet turned back so bravely-O.
Tonight I shall sleep in a cold, open field
Along with the raggle-taggle gipsies-O.' "

The Gipsy I know would hide if she saw a real gipsy, or cling to me in nervous fear; yet I perceive in her, when she chants the ballad, that core of wild daring around which she is built. And yet I cannot call it daring only. It is the reality behind the shy appearance. For my Gipsy is a gipsy in a house. Some impish fate has snared this adventurous seed and planted it in a domestic soil. There she goes about her small affairs, low-voiced, kind-handed, studying without too much unwillingness the hard rules of such a life. Like any little girl, she practises a daily make-believe, keeps house in a nut-shell, moves about within the ordinances provided for her. She is bound by ties both of affection and of timidity to the world she lives in, a world vast and overshadowing to her, I suppose, terrible and inexplicable. Something loyal in her holds her to it. She fits her habits to its mysteries without

resentful questions why it should be as it is. She will never speculate, never waste her strength in challenges. She may go on to a serene old age, satisfied to pick up felicity where she finds it. But if ever a call comes to her from that other world in which she was intended to be born, she will doubt no longer than did the lady when the gipsies came to her door. Then this Gipsy, I know, will put off the smooth raiment of her ordinary custom and take to sturdy leather. I or any one else will labor in vain to tempt her back. She will run, not awkward then, along the path which beckons her. What will she care for house and land, for goose-feather bed or hospitable sheet, even for a new-wedded lord? Her luminous eyes will have become points of radiance, not to be diverted from her vision. Her able hands will have snatched at her precious opportunity. Though the wind may toss her curls till they are wild as a mænad's, and the sun may burn her face till it is black as the smoke of her camp-fire, she will dance cheerfully in the cold, open field of her choice. Let this world call with the sternest or the tenderest commands,

and she will listen, I try to believe, with a wrung heart and with a gush of tears, but, for all her timidity and affection, she will dare the wild and gipsy world.

THE BARBARIAN

Not if the Barbarian were ten times the boy that she was once hopefully expected to turn out, could she exhibit more of the two-fisted virtues which might have gone with another sex. From the moment when she first showed herself to the eyes of this world, with her mane of dark hair and her deep-throated cry, she has borne herself with something of a swagger, determined and pugnacious. Attacked by the whooping-cough at a bare five months, she was less overcome by it than excited to fiery rages, like the young Hercules with the serpents in his cradle. Once she had found her feet, she ventured wherever feet would take her. Her sisters might tremble away from dogs and cats, but the Barbarian pounced upon them with shouts of recognition. Her sisters might shudder at the water, but the Barbarian walked into it as into a native element. "I like to drown," she told me at her present age of three, meaning that she

liked to go under and come up, blinking for a second and then shouting at the bystanders to admire her deed. I shall not soon forget the day, a few months ago, when I was called from my study to the garden by enormous sounds of battle, and found the Barbarian fighting a boy of about her age and size who had come to visit her. Tearless as a pirate, her round face absurdly grim, she was cuffing and striking as well as being cuffed and struck, falling down and scrambling up again, rolling with her antagonist, before I could reach them, over and over upon a paved walk, two animated rotundities bent on mutual destruction. There was no quarter and no chivalry. When I got my hands on the young gladiators to separate them, the Barbarian was clutching the boy's hair and pounding his head against a brick, as he, it may in justice be explained, had just been doing to her. Even after the separation they struggled to be at each other. I could feel their hot hearts pumping with rage, girl's no less than boy's.

The Barbarian's pugnacity, however, goes with circumspection. Toward strangers of the human race she is watchfully reserved. She bides

her time, and saves her strength for necessary occasions. I think no small part of this caution is due to her tardiness in the matter of speech. Precocious in most physical activities, she has only just begun to pronounce her words so that any one not in her own family can make out her meaning. Certainly this delay has affected her in her relations with the other children in her class at school. They may play together as much as they like, but the Barbarian holds aloof, planning and carrying out her own schemes. Experience has doubtless taught her that she is handicapped by her slow and difficult tongue, and she is not willing to compete on grounds whereon she is bound to be at a disadvantage, since she is not permitted to offset her unintelligible words with intelligible violence. Without her knowing it, this handicap, in and out of school, must have rankled in her. It might have made her quarrelsome were she not naturally so self-sufficient. As it is, she gets along as well as she can with her delaying vocabulary, which is profuse if not exact, and tries everything at least once. There is not an adventure within the range of her imagination which she has not undertaken. Just at present

she has set her mind, for some reason which she does not make clear, upon shooting a cow with a bow and arrow. She keeps, indeed, at a careful distance from all such animals, and she has never yet been able to shoot an arrow farther than she could throw it, but she is loyal to her idea, and stalks her prey with a solemn patience which amuses me as blasphemy must amuse the gods.

Nothing is more characteristic of her than this same patience. Now and then it deserts her, and she disturbs the echoes with her fury, when she is thwarted, as if unable to comprehend the fate which could so misuse her. But usually she is as patient as grass in a garden. She asks to be allowed to drive motors, light matches, play with razors, taste adult dishes, wear party frocks to picnics, swim across lakes, feed lions, pick flowers from train windows, or take the goldfish to bed with her, and she never rises from her lunch without suggesting that she be excused from her nap. When these privileges are withheld, she ordinarily shows no sign of disappointment, but inventively thinks of something else to ask for. Her policy seems to be almost deliberate. She

grasps at everything in sight, apparently disposed to think that this is a better way to fill the hands than the way of fixing upon a few desires and pressing them unduly. No one ever wept less than the Barbarian over spilled milk or plans defeated. The world is always before her, full and tempting. She shoulders a cheerful way through it, perfectly undeterred by bad weather or metaphysical prohibitions.

I scarcely know whether it is a contradiction or a corollary of the Barbarian's violence that she is also such a well, such a flame, such a hurricane of tenderness. She croons over her dolls with a voice that rises almost to a cry, as if she were defending them against tigers. With pets she is still more ardent. When I watch her playing, as she does hours each day, with her gray cat, Friar Tuck, I marvel that he has ever grown to such robust dimensions and such mandarin poise. Up and down stairs, round and round the house, back and forth through lawn and orchard, she carries him in her hot arms, babbling to him. Together they wallow on the ground or before the fire, now one, now the other uppermost. She tells him good

night in the accents of a soul speaking an eternal farewell, and greets him in the morning with the rapture of a mother who has just met a lost child at the resurrection. If I warn her that she is rough with Friar Tuck, and likely to hurt him, she falls upon him with such an agony of penitence that he may fare more sadly than before. He is safe from her passion only when he takes himself off, as he does at prudent intervals, to a refuge up a tree or under the veranda. Yet there are limits to her interest in him. When, occasionally, he finds his way to her bed at night, she wakes the household with a shout, less of terror at those bright eyes in the dark, or at that rumbling purr in the silence, than of resentment that he should claim part of the space over which she likes to sprawl unhindered.

Toward pain she is magnificently, absurdly tender. I came in this summer from the garden with a bleeding hand which I had hurt in work on a stone wall. What violent sympathy from the Barbarian! She hovered about me while the wound was being dressed as if this were my final hour. And when afterward I sat down for a few minutes before going back to my occupation,

she clung to me until I laughed out at her solicitude. She threw her arms about my neck in bursts of pity. She held my hand to her bosom and fondled it. From some hoard of racial memory she fished up baby talk and brooded over me. Yet the preposterous child was fresh, it happened, from a loud altercation with her sisters, and returned to the conflict when she believed she had comforted me.

There is further evidence as to her tenderness in the rôle she plays in the Robin Hood Club which has lately been the principal amusement of the Barbarian and those sisters. She is neither the crafty Robin nor the valiant Little John, but the broken-hearted Allan-a-Dale who has lost his sweetheart. When the stage is set for her entry, in wanders the Barbarian from behind the blackberry bushes, strumming on a harp which at other times is her bow, and loudly repining over her bereavement. She is full of the deepest concern over Allan's sad plight, which she reports with a sincerity no less convincing than that which she shows the next instant when plans begin to be laid by the helpful Robin and Little John for the defeat of the elderly plot which

has set an obstacle between the lovers. I think, however, that the Barbarian becomes rather more genuinely herself when the avenging crew start off to undo the threatened damage, and the harp turns into the bow which it was originally meant to be. Her forte is action, not lamentation.

A constant activity of all her muscles and faculties is, I suppose, her normal mode of life. From the moment she wakes till the moment she goes to sleep again she is quite incapable of languor. Tall and heavy for her age, she is not awkward. On slim feet, in moccasins or sandals, she wades through deep meadows or scrambles over rough pastures with no more than half the spills which any onlooker would prophesy. Much as she is addicted to violence, she only rarely hurts herself, being singularly alert in self-preservation. Moreover, she remembers her mishaps. Once she blundered into the ashes of a bonfire which had smoldered from the day before, and burned herself. No child in a proverb ever cherished a keener recollection. She now skirts all fires at almost as safe a distance as the earth keeps from the sun. She dons strange costumes and acts up to them with a

steady consciousness of what they oblige her to do. At this instant, in fact, she is strutting through the orchard in a belted tunic of bright green, a clumsy applewood bow over one shoulder and a brown canvas quiver over the other, engaged apparently in some concern of Robin Hood's meiny. That she is not unconscious of her own identity appears from frequent cries to her elder sisters to wait for her; but when she catches up with them, she is once more Allan-a-Dale or whoever it is that she imagines she is to-day.

Is it solely because the Barbarian is so young, still so incompleted by any degree of maturity, that she appears to have a mere caricature of a character, to be only a child out of a farce? I come increasingly to believe that as she grows up hour by hour. In her three years she has had time to find within herself but a few of the qualities which she will probably some day find there and employ. She meets with a surprising aptness the demands which are made upon her. This past spring, when she was very ill, through six weeks of persistent fever which wore her to a wraith of her own robust self, she discovered a

fortitude and an endurance which no one dreamed she had. Even when the fever was upon her at its fiercest, and a dreadful thirst consumed her, she would frolic between the climaxes of her distress. She was content to be distracted by games that would have bored her a month before. Finding it difficult to make herself understood by the new nurse who was attending her, the Barbarian put forth conscious efforts to improve her speech, and impressively succeeded. Not till the very end of her convalescence did her old tumult of energy revive and cause her to be fretful at delays. There was an episode of her illness which added several strokes of reality to the caricature which is the Barbarian. Because she could not be persuaded to stay under the blankets of her bed, she had been wearing gay sweaters, orange or henna or blue or apricot, and had taken much pleasure each day in choosing which she should wear. Then strange surgeons came to perform an operation. She first screamed with terror at the sight of them, but when she learned that there was no avoiding whatever it was that they had come to do, she called for her favorite orange sweater and afterward gave herself

courageously into their hands. If she was to be a victim, I imagine she obscurely thought, she would at least be a victim on something like her own terms.

It is at such moments that the Barbarian gives most joy to those who watch her unfolding career. I cannot get over the impression, as I watch, that she or some anonymous sculptor is modeling a human being before my eyes. All the materials are throbbing with vitality, but so far they have not taken unmistakable shape. Any of a hundred traits may appear to disappoint my present expectations. There can, however, be no doubt as to the bold beginnings which have been made. The hands which build her do not fumble. As they have chosen for her the colors of a rich vitality, so they have chosen for her the strong preliminary outlines of passion and tenderness, courage and prudence. The Barbarian will never sulk away from experience, I think, but will meet it always in the middle of the lists. I do not imagine that she will go hunting it very far, being too much a creature of the tangible world to follow in the dim path of visions. I cannot imagine her ever becoming a fanatic, re-

doubling her efforts because she has forgotten her aim. She will not forget her aim, for its object will be on the solid earth, and she will calculate the way to it without frenzy; and if she misses it, she will not torture herself with agonies of regret. Nor need she torture herself, since she has in her such gusto for a multitude of pleasures and satisfactions that there will always be a world of them for her to fall back on. Perhaps, indeed, she is of an earthiness which the lovers of pure spirit will reject. To them I ask: Have the temperate beasts no charm or beauty? Have trees no splendor for the reason that their roots burrow through the soil to take hold of substantial rock? Have men and women who put out generous arms and draw to themselves all they can hold of desirable things, and then walk with them along a widening highway of ordered days—have they no elements which can cause them to be ranked among the triumphs of nature? When I am tired of saints whining in dingy corners, I turn to the Barbarian, fighting and forgiving in the bright sun. When I am sick of too pallid beauties, I am made well again by watching the Barbarian, dirt-smudged and

grass-stained from crown to toe, patiently trying to eat every strawberry or pluck every devil's paint-brush on a windy hillside. When I am done with heroes, I renew my interest in the race from the sound of the Barbarian howling in a panic because a wasp has come too near her. The brown Barbarian, tumultuous and sure-footed, tucks the universe under her arm as if it were a football, and plows along in the blithe knowledge that there is a goal at either end of the field.

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF A DILEMMA

I MET Rose Winton one summer a good many years ago when I was spending a vacation in an Illinois town of which I remember nothing so well as the fact that this troubled woman lived there. What brought us together, it happens, was a taste for Bernard Shaw, which we had in common at a time when such a taste was less common than it is now. Hearing that I had his books, Mrs. Winton asked me to lend her one of them which she had not read, and we fell into a long talk which led to tea, dinner at her house a few days later, and eventually to her telling me of the secret dilemma which dominated her whole life. That she told me the secret at all may seem to some persons the strangest thing about it; to me that now seems less strange than it did then, when, indeed, almost everything about her was surprising to a youth of twenty.

Our talk on this particular occasion, I remember, had been running upon the mood which beauty sometimes induces in its lovers, who become so avid to catch and possess it that they destroy it by the ardor with which they spring. Possibly I had already bored her with my esthetics when I became aware, with considerable discomfort, that if she was hearing the words I uttered, she was hardly making out the sense, such as there was, behind them. Her dark eyes had deepened until I could perceive in them new depths and a new confusion. Something very remote from my speculations held her, as if she were listening to tantalizing, yet imperative, ghosts of sounds from other quarters. Her hands, which I thought morbid, with their bitten nails, kept moving to some rhythm assuredly not suggested by anything we had said.

I hesitated, but I think she did not notice it. She was taking me as her hearer very little into account. I was there, and by that accident I learned her story.

"What if these things are true about beauty, or any other things? It doesn't matter. There is more ugliness in the world than beauty. It's

like the devil, who is so much busier than God. You believe in the devil, I hope."

I tried to laugh with the air of one who regarded all superstitions lightly, but under her bitter gaze I could not help feeling that my native skepticism was, somehow, raw and shallow.

"I know there is a devil. I know he is busy. I know he has got me beaten. I have loved beauty all my life, and ugliness is all I have ever got out of it."

I tried to protest, indicating her pleasant house, the full life she seemed to me to lead. She brushed my protest aside.

"You don't know. All this is on the surface. Underneath I am in a trap that I never can get out of. I never can. I never can."

I was both frightened and curious, unable to decide whether I should ask her about the cause of her distress or try to lead her away from it. But she, with no notice of my concern, went on as if driven by the irresistible egotism of a passion too long concealed.

"I can prove there is a devil, for I have seen his work, and felt it. Before I was married I had a lover. I don't blame him. He didn't

know how ignorant I was. I gave him everything I could give him, because I thought it was so wonderful that he wanted me so much. Then I found I was going to have a child. For some reason which I can't understand now, I didn't want my lover to know. Perhaps I hated him; perhaps I was too proud to ask him to help me. Anyway, I managed to get away before any one suspected, even my mother, and had my baby in New York. What was I to do with him? I imagined how it would be if I brought him back here. To say nothing of myself, he would be under a handicap which, I thought, I had no right to bring upon him, after what I had already done. So finally I told my brother, who was married and childless, and asked him to help me.

"He and his wife were wonderful then. They agreed to adopt my baby and to take care of it. They had meant to adopt one some time, for they had given up hope that they might have a child of their own. Of course it was like tearing my heart out, but I thought it was the best thing for my baby, and so I agreed. But I was wrong, absolutely wrong. I ought to have foreseen what would happen. Every month he looked

more and more like me. I couldn't keep away from my brother's house and my baby. And of course my sister-in-law began finally to be jealous. That was only natural. As she said, I had let her take the child. She had had the responsibility for him. She had come to love him as if he were really hers. Even then it might not have been so bad, but he loved me more than he loved her. I felt that she was justified in the stand she took, so I decided to give him up again. It hurt me worse than ever, this time, but I did it."

How heavily her deliberate words fell upon the quietness of the room!

"I argued myself into the notion that it was right for me to be married without telling my husband. As I saw it, my secret wasn't merely my secret; it was my brother's and his wife's. I had no right to give away their secret. So I didn't tell. I supposed I could have another child, and I thought that if I did, I might not be so miserable about my boy. But I have never had another. I never shall. You see where it leaves me. I can't go forward and I can't go back. If I had only myself to consider, I would claim my child again, and let the whole world

know the secret. But I must, I must, think of him, and of my brother and sister, and now of my husband. My husband has been very good to me. He loves me, and I think I love him. And yet I can't ask him to accept the burden which belongs to me alone.

"No, I tell you, it is a dilemma without a solution. If you only knew how it breaks me to pieces day after day. Here is the strongest passion in me fighting with all its strength against a host of little passions which all together are just equal to it. I despise them. They are only conventions, or only sympathies at the best. My passion for my child ought to overpower them in a moment, I tell myself. But I can't let it. I am so bound that I have to put my will on the side of all these miserable little conventions and sympathies. You can imagine the war that is going on inside me all the time. I can't stop it. I can't take the side I should like to take. I can't get away from it. I can't act at all. I am tied fast. I am on fire, and yet I am frozen.

"Do you wonder, then, that I believe in the devil? Do you wonder that I know he is busier

than God? The world is ugly, and the devil runs it to suit himself."

I remember the dreadful sickness which came over me as I listened to her story. With it came the sense of a pitiful impotence which I shared with her in this dilemma. There was nothing that I could do, nothing that I could say. I must have stared at her, expecting, I know, to see something more theatrical than I saw. Despite her desperate mood, however, she was still outwardly very much the same. I have still the most vivid image of her deep eyes, barely reddened by her distress, her black hair brushed straight back, her full throat, in which I could see her pulse, the outlines of her arms and bosom, which by their softness now seemed in such ironical contrast to the stern battle going on within her, her restless hands with their bitten nails.

Thus at my first look into the dark cavern of a human life I discovered a problem which seemed to me to have no answer whatsoever.

Then, suddenly, she laughed, as if she were jangling a chime of bells.

"Come, I mustn't pester you with my troubles. You probably have enough of your own. Don't worry about me. I shall get along very likely, and be a wise woman when I am old. If I were wiser now, I shouldn't have bothered you with my secret."

But the matter, of course, was not to be dismissed so lightly. When I showed the emotion which I felt over her plight, and doubtless the pride which I felt in her confidence, I gave her the excuse, of which, I now see, she had little need, to talk further about the dilemma, which was the daily subject of her thoughts. With that conversation began the series of conversations which I had with her that summer and in which I learned more about her than I had yet learned about any woman.

She never returned to the details of her past, but talked always of her dilemma, analyzing it with a subtlety which I thought as great as her distress. Convinced as she was that there was no way out, she could not give up searching for one. Formerly, she told me, she had kept hoping for some miracle which would help her; but she claimed she no longer believed in any such

possibility, though I wonder now if that was not the thing she was looking for all along. In any case, she was forever weighing the possible consequences of any action she might take. Would her child be better off with her or with its foster-mother? Might not her brother sometime feel that he had been unjustified in separating mother and son in this fashion and wish that she had demanded him with more vigor while there was yet opportunity? Could she expect to keep the secret permanently from her husband, and would the effect not be far more painful upon him if he learned the truth from any one besides his wife or from her too late? What if the true state of affairs should eventually be at once more difficult and more necessary to reveal? I had not dreamed that a mind could so persist as Rose Winton's did in studying the labyrinth of its fate without finding some kind of key.

Her dilemma had become the center of her existence. I do not mean, of course, that she had no other concerns. It was a perpetual wonder to me that now and then she could be so gay about trivial matters. Her curiosity moved among a hundred topics which mine had barely touched.

She teased me, as she teased her husband, about our slower intellects. When she was merry, as indeed she often was, it seemed to me that her merriment went through and through her. Watching her dance, or dancing with her, I was struck always with the apparently happy abandon of her body, as if a point of flame, rather than flesh and blood, fluttered there. And yet in an instant she would lose these outward qualities and be plunged, without an interval that I could measure, into the pit of her misery. If she was eager for pleasure, I perceived, it was because she found in it an escape from that deeper self in which joy normally resides, but which, with her, was poisoned by her stubborn sense of desperation. Since her period of escape could not be indefinite, she would sooner or later have to come back to her joyless self, and then it would exact the harshest penalties.

"Surely there must be some end to such torture!" she cried once when our talk had come round, as it so regularly did, to her tragedy. "I can't see why it doesn't wear me out and make me numb. I hate this fearful strength of mine that keeps me able to endure so much. With

most pain people faint after a while, but I only grow more capable of pain. If there were anything to do! If I could act, no matter how, instead of always standing still and trying to figure out what would be least bad for everybody who is concerned! I don't see why I don't go mad. I don't see why I shouldn't wish I could."

Once or twice I tried to hint that she had possibly hugged her grief too close and that by some more steady exercise of the will she might lift herself above it, but to go further with such hints seemed to me a sort of irreverence toward her unmistakable agony. She had communicated to me her sense of helplessness. At a moment when I had been full of hope and courage she had, involuntarily enough, enlisted my sympathies in a cause which, so far as I could see, could have no victory. This stalemate would continue for Rose Winton till death should sweep the board, I then told myself. I was full of bitterness at a universe which had such dilemmas in it. Like her, I could find no course of action. At least, however, I determined that I could and would give her the poor comfort of a friend always ready to listen to her.

With what horror, then, I began to see that even in this aim I was doomed to fail. As her habit of confiding in me grew, I could not misunderstand, inexperienced as I was, the change that came over her. Gradually she recovered a certain buoyancy which I guessed must once have been frequent in her moods. Her hours of gloom were shorter, her intervals of pleasure richer than they had been during the first weeks of our acquaintance. Telling her secret had furnished her a partial outlet for the pain which had filled her too full to be endured. But, and here were the roots of my horror at the situation, this pain was being poured into me, who had no confidant. My nerves, things I had hitherto known only by hearsay that I had, were habitually unstrung. Her recurrent moods ceased to interest me, and, as I had to pretend to be interested long after I actually was, they came before long to irritate me. From marveling at the passion of her distress I turned to resenting it, since it pressed upon me with such an incessant weight. From rejoicing at the signs of her recovery I turned to hating them because of the tax which had been, no matter how innocently, levied upon me. Worst of all,

of course, I had to contend with the horrible sense within me that I had fallen short of even a decent patience. Surely a generous spirit could endure this, which was so much less than Mrs. Winton had to endure. I spurred myself to fresh resolutions each time I left her, and yet I saw her each next time with positive antipathy, not precisely for her, but for the task I had chivalrously assumed.

In the end, for all my resolutions, I left the town with a savage abruptness, taking pains to bid her farewell in the presence of several others. I have never seen her since that day and know from her letters little about her, but I know that she has done nothing to resolve her dilemma.

Incredible as the whole affair seems now, it haunted me for years. The world in which I lived during most of my twenties was a world which I saw, because of that summer, peopled with dilemmas. Long after I had ceased to think often of this particular case, I still thought of fate as some exterior thing, organized to tempt and trap its victims. It was more than a decade before a chance meeting with another woman threw a long light back over Mrs. Winton and

did as much to make her circumstances clear to me as anything ever will.

This other woman, whose very name I do not know, came to consult me about a novel which she said she was writing. The plot, she explained, had stopped in mid-career despite anything she could do with it. I had not listened long when I guessed that she was more intimately involved in this material than she would have been in any imagined plot. It was almost certainly her own story that she was telling me, hoping under this disguise to get some more impartial counsel than she could presumably have got from any one nearer to her.

It seems that her heroine, to give my caller the benefit of the doubt, was married to one man and in love with another. She was willing to leave her husband, with or without a divorce, no matter what the consequences. But her lover was so placed that this simple solution seemed impossible. By reason of his public station, which I suspect was that of a clergyman, he believed that he would lose all his usefulness if he obtained a wife on these terms, while any more informal arrangement was quite out of the

question. He was thus faced with a dilemma, divided between a love which he could not do without and a duty which would not let him have his love. What, the baffled novelist asked me, could be done with a plot which thus so obstinately resisted all her ingenuity?

I found it difficult to advise her, guessing as I did that she would take any conceivable advice to herself, but I did the best I could. There was, I told her, in such a case no solution except what had to be provided by the character of the lover. If he wanted the woman powerfully enough, he would take her even at the gravest cost; if he cared more for his duty than for her, he would be loyal to his duty. She would have, in creating her lover, to endow him with such qualities as would prepare him for one outcome or the other.

Though I had tried hard to maintain the fiction that we were discussing the plot of her novel, not of her life, she winced with a pain which I tried even harder not to seem to notice. She had obviously never admitted to herself that the cause of her distress lay in her lover, possibly in some laggard or pedantic disposition which her pride would long make her hesitate to acknowledge.

She had regarded the state of their affairs as a mere tangle brought upon them from without, and she had clung to the hope that she could, with a little help, find some dexterous solution.

"But there are so many possibilities of action in any life," she protested. "Surely I can hit on a fresh one for my plot."

Doubtless she did not take my comment as final in any way, but I do not like to remember the look of despair which was on her face when she left me.

Not unnaturally, the incident brought Rose Winton back to my mind. To my surprise, the sense of a malevolent dilemma which I had long felt in connection with her had utterly disappeared from my mind. It had, I realized, been gone so long that I found it difficult to recall, at least to recall its former poignancy. Her tragedy had begun at home, in her own character. A different woman would never have given up her child; a different woman would have acknowledged and recovered it though she disturbed a hundred lives; a different woman would have refused to accept a dilemma for her destiny. I do not know that Mrs. Winton's fate was necessarily

any the less tragic, or less agonizing to her, than if it had been spun and measured for her by the devil in whom she believed. For that matter, she might argue that the devil had shaped her character for this purpose. But I know that if, in that summer long ago, she had been able to fix her scrutiny upon the quarter from which her predicament truly came, she would have had a better chance to escape from it.

BURGLAR'S DARK

We were talking, late at night, about fear. Clarkson held that it is the motive behind more conduct than any other of the instincts. Even self-preservation, he said, is largely fear; and he argued that love is governed by nothing else so tyrannically.

"What besides fear can account for the use men have made of alcohol? They turn to it to be fooled into thinking that they are not afraid—not afraid of old age, of poverty, of women, of boredom, of the horrid company of their own thoughts. All that has been brought about to make them feel secure in the world has spread but a thin layer over their emotions. Because they know that fear lies at the root of half their actions, they deny it or keep silent about it. There, nevertheless, it is, ready to start up with its ancient force at the bare hint of an occasion. The dark, for instance, breeds in any but unimaginative minds a fear which no reasoning can conquer. Put the brav-

est man alone in a dark house, and he will find it peopled with fantastic shapes and ominous sounds. Though he may know well enough that he himself has peopled it by his causeless fears, he will yet be troubled in dim regions of his mind quite inaccessible to his will. The stuff of which he is shaped has never unlearned the shrinking dread in which for thousands of years his ancestors huddled together, in the midst of nightly perils, waiting for the sun to restore them."

I suppose I seemed obtuse to Clarkson, for he went on to prove his point by citing a case in his own experience which I can hardly believe he had ever told at length before. Indeed, as he talked, I had the sense that he was ridding himself of the last vestiges of a memory which it worried him not to have put into words. Certainly he has never referred to it since that evening, and I should hesitate to refer to it in his presence. It gave me a peep into secrets which, once revealed, must henceforth be doubly secret between us.

"I think I never told you," he said, "about the burglar who got into my apartment last winter and stole a purse out of my bedroom while I was asleep. Now that I think back on it, I am quite

at loss to know why the affair should have moved me as it did. I did not see the thief at all. My wife, however, woke while he was in the room and saw him slink out, a gray shadow which she was not even sure she saw through the mist of sleep. Not till the next morning, when we missed the purse, could we be certain that the apartment had been entered. Nor was I particularly concerned that day. What really happened to me happened the next night, when I began to be obsessed with the thought that he might come back for a considerable sum of money which had been in my wife's desk, but which he had overlooked.

"At first I managed to smile at this senseless fear. Of course the burglar would not run the risk of going to the one place in the city which was sure to be alert. But as the night rolled by, I asked myself less and less why I had fallen into such an obsession. That part of me which could ask a sober question had gradually been overwhelmed by waves of apprehension rising from deeps which I did not understand. I had fastened all the doors and windows with special care and had seen to it that the iron gate of the court below was provided with a new lock. I

had even gone to the absurd length of putting several tin pans just inside the window which the burglar had opened, so that to raise the sash now would set the whole pile tumbling and clattering. And yet, thus intrenched, fortified by a hundred good reasons why we were perfectly safe, I was afraid.

"It had surprised me as the night thickened down to see how fear had crept into me. There had been talk in the papers about a wave of crime, but I had been skeptical, and had pointed out to my wife that this was a season of scanty news. Now, however, the park opposite my house, the court behind it, and all the city roofs were alive, to my imagination, with slinking, violent men. I had stayed late in my study, after the family was quiet, trying to forget my increasing restlessness in work. Some spirit of mischief seemed to possess the house. A wicker chair would creak, a steam pipe thump, a door move on its hinges, a board in the floor expand or shrink with a suspicious noise. Though I forced myself to explain every slight disturbance, I could not clear my mind of the uneasiness which each one stimulated. Every startling sound left its little

residue of mystery and the total haunted me. After sitting two hours at my desk, with my back to the study door, I had to turn and sit facing it, because of my insistent dread that the burglar might slip in and catch me off my guard. But when I faced round, I soon saw that I had not improved my state of mind. My eyes now refused to help me with my work at all. They kept deserting it and peering at the door.

"An amusing thing happened while I sat there. I heard a sudden call from the nursery, which was next the study, and hurried to it in a sudden panic. There I found my two children upright in their beds, chattering and trembling.

" 'I know I heard a robber coming in our window,' one of the children said.

" 'He will steal all our toys,' the younger wailed.

"Comforting them was a comfort to me, and I smiled as I walked back to the study. But once there again, I found that their quaint distress had in some way been contagious. Those small bodies shaking in my arms and those small hearts beating against me had planted sympathetic tremors in me. I grew so restless that I had to do something, and so set out to explore the house

again. At every step I assured myself that there could be no interlopers in any of the rooms, and yet at every step I kept expecting some flash of light, some blow, perhaps, or some bullet.

"Seeing that it was midnight, I then went to bed. It distressed me to find that my wife had not slept, either. She too had felt the terror I was feeling, and I grew more rather than less perturbed when I noticed how much confidence my nearness seemed to give her. Though she was tense and nervous when I came in, she gradually relaxed, and I noticed that her breathing grew more regular, as if she were dropping off to sleep. For myself, I felt more wide awake than ever.

"Now that I had put out all the lights, the house was very dark. Acting on some impulse which I cannot now remember, I had drawn the shades. In my bedroom, however, light flickered in from the winking lamp in the park opposite, through a window left partly open. The curtain stirred constantly in the breeze, and the light, coming through the curtain, threw strange patterns on the wall—dashes and splotches and grotesque designs and images. As I watched this play of light and shadow, so strangely figured, I fancied

myself soothed by it. Here was fortuity making charming pictures to entertain me. I sank a little deeper into my bed and started to close my eyes. The next instant my nerves awoke with a jerk. There on the wall was a round spot of light flashing and hovering like the rays from a dark lantern. In a second I saw it was only another shape which the gleam from the park lamp had accidentally assumed, but it left my pulses throbbing.

"I raised myself stealthily on my elbow to try to look through the door of my bedroom into the hall and to listen for noises in the house. I heard, it seemed to me, dozens of them. Somewhere a shade flapped. Several drops of water fell in the shower-bath with an echoing splash. A mouse scurried about its own dangerous affairs. The wall-paper in a remoter room cracked, as it occasionally did when a section of paste gave way behind it. At least, this was the way I explained this last sound to myself, though I wondered if it might not have been a cautious step on a yielding floor. I strained my ears to a sharper attention. Those dozens of noises had been followed by a minute of utter silence, such as now

and then comes in a house at dead of night. The silence had more omen for me than the sounds. I could not analyze it as I had done with them. I was amazed during this silence at the discovery that I could hear my own heart beat. My blood was beating in my ears, as if it had rushed there to muffle my hearing. Just then a late motor hummed by, back-firing in front of the house, and the silence was broken up.

"Though my wife had not stirred or spoken, I now guessed that she was awake again, and whispered to her that she must not be afraid. I remember that I whispered and that so did she. She could not tell whether she had been asleep or not. It came over me that for all the courage of her replies she was still full of that moment the night before when she had first perceived the prowling stranger in the room, was again numb with the apprehension with which she had watched him steal away. It touched me now to recall that, when she had roused me, she had absolutely refused to let me follow him. 'No, no,' she had said, clinging to me. 'Let him have anything he wants. You can't tell what he might do to you in the dark.'

"The recollection somehow emboldened me, and I got up to go through the house again to be sure that no one had got in. This time I proceeded very thoroughly, pushing all the electric switches as I went. In the light, the rooms looked consolingly familiar. I noticed the worn rug in the drawing-room, a book upside down on its shelf, a child's toy sprawling underneath a table, a picture out of plumb, ashes whitening a portion of the hearth. As each light flashed on, I grew quieter; my pulses subsided. When I had finished my survey, I had a luxurious sense of escape from my fears. Now, I thought, I could go to sleep in peace. But as I retreated toward my bed, switching off the lights one by one on my way, I found that I was again filling each room behind me with the shapes I had just expelled. How fecund that dark was! Perhaps, after all, I told myself, my search had not been complete. Perhaps the invader that I dreaded was hidden in some corner. Perhaps he was waiting on the roof or kneeling outside a window on the fire-escape. The burglar, dim as he was, became a definite person, ruthless, irresponsible. I had no weapon in the house, but I

went to a closet where I kept a few tools, and carried a hammer back to bed with me.

"The swift change to security and back again had set my nerves to tingling. The actual hammer in my hand, poor a defense as it would be against a knife or pistol, made the danger intensely vivid to me. By daylight I believed I was a man of at least ordinary courage, and I certainly had never been a victim of inexplicable moods. But the dark, I felt, was an ally of danger. Mysterious things happen in the dark, such as blows or stabs or shots. On my way to bed again I suffered countless imaginary wounds in my creeping flesh. I shook with a chill which was only skin-deep. I alternately flushed and shivered. My hands were cold. My scalp pricked. I even perceived, incredulously, that my hair had stiffened slightly.

"Back under the warm covers, I was still chilly. My body longed for sleep, but my mind was alive with a fierce wakefulness. When my wife had apparently dozed off again, I began to listen for signs that the city was still awake and law-abiding. Every passerby whose footsteps woke the silent street was a relief. I blessed a pair of

rowdies who went howling past. I delighted in the unintelligible words of wandering lovers. The yell of an amorous cat or the bark of an unquiet dog reassured me more than it startled me. I felt a singular brotherhood with the men whom I heard emptying garbage-cans with a grateful din.

"Pretty soon even such distractions ceased, and my mind came back to the ominous interior of the house. Once more I felt shudderingly alone. What could I do against steel or gunpowder in the hands of a determined thief? I imagined a muttered challenge, a grapple in the dark, the screams of my wife and children, tumult, a mortal stroke. I shrank at the thought of some savage thrust at my abdomen or at my unprotected back. It was not in my head or shoulders or arms or legs that I felt this terror, but in the softer parts of my body, which I should have said were the least sensitive. How naked a thing, I suddenly realized, is a man in the malevolent world! His primeval claws are gone, his teeth through thousands of years have almost lost their use as weapons. Intelligence, I reflected, is not enough. Here on this plane of bitter conflict, as I saw my-

self, I was at the mercy of any brute that might attack me. Thus, in ancestral days, men must have shuddered among their branches at the long howl of the saber-tooth or cowered in their gloomy lairs when the great bear sniffed at the cave-mouth.

"Again a child cried out in the nursery, and then another, partly roused by the cry. Though neither woke, I felt a wild resentment springing up in me along with my fears. I had always been a peaceful man. I had worked at my own tasks and had harmed no one. I had earned this house and the right to live in it, unmolested, with my family. Yet in the midst of my level existence some evil creature had prowled through my rooms, pawing over my possessions, leaving a trail of terror. It was worse than terror: it was slime. It had broken the natural sleep of children, so that now they tossed about in the grip, I imagined, of ugly dreams. It had crept into my own bedroom, had possibly sniggered over me and my wife lying there, had insolently carried off what valuables it could find. The very thought was loathsome; it was obscene. The miscreant had committed an outrage against

human decency. Some sort of security, after all, was the very basis of self-respect. Yet here all that I had established for myself was violated. The injury might be forgotten, but the insult remained.

"A kind of panic swept over me now, as if I had been still further unnerved by my burst of anger. There were new sounds, new silences. I was sure I heard a window sliding up, heard sly hands reaching out, heard breathings that did not belong in this house. It was no longer so easy to analyze the various noises as it had been at midnight. Was that only a wind swaying the curtain? Was that a mouse in a wall or a drill gnawing at a lock? All my senses were again strung tight, and my fears played on them. I had begun to be worn out by my vigilance, though I dared not lessen it. My hands, cold now for hours, felt clumsy. My spine seemed weak, almost as if the lower portion of it had been removed. My eyelids smarted. My tongue and lips were dry. Having lain so long flat on my back, I wanted to turn on one side or the other, but I was afraid to listen with one ear only. I suspected peculiar odors, as if the burglar had

got in smelling of whisky, or as if he had come in armed with chloroform. The thought of chloroform was hideous to me. Suppose I should be drugged, and my wife and children left to face the terror alone?

"Here my wife stirred beside me, and again I guessed that she had been awake without my knowing it. I whispered as reassuringly as I could, and she settled down once more with that patience which I never can quite understand in her. Ordinarily I should have speculated a little about it. Now it touched my emotions. I was not sure whether I was calmed or irritated by it. In any case, I felt that I must take the whole burden of keeping watch.

"From such reflections, sensations rather, my mind snapped back to my fears. By a freshened coolness in the air I knew that the night had advanced to that hour before dawn which I had heard was the favorite hour of housebreakers. I wanted to turn on a light to look at my watch, but I was unwilling to rouse my wife unnecessarily; and I thought, with a shiver, what a mark I should make for any pistol that might be lurking in the dark hall. I began to ache for morning

and security again. Surely the street must soon awake to the passage of milk-wagons and provision-trucks. I tried to remember when such traffic recommenced. I almost hurt myself listening for the first hoofs and wheels. This was the period between the latest and the earliest wayfarers. The stillness seemed as close as a fog, wrapping the city in its dull blanket and deadening all its customary usages.

"My imagination came to see my plight as dependent upon a race between the burglar and the dawn. With what swift feet my enemy crept toward me, determined now to do his job quickly, pitiless toward any one who might resist! This was his hour. And with what sullen languor the night slouched by! I saw its vast bulk revolving unconcerned. I wanted to set my shoulders to its wheels, to break my heart and sinews upon them if need be, if only I could work a miracle and hurry its deadly pace. Instead, it dragged on as slowly as if there were not a peril in the world.

"God! would the morning never come?

"A tension so prolonged had finally fixed my body in a kind of rigor, leaving my mind free to run here and there on unchecked wings. It

ranged desperately through the house, peeped into hateful corners, felt itself pounced upon at every turn. Particularly it watched the fire-escape, from which the burglar had entered the drawing-room the night before. My mind saw him crouched on the roof ready to make his descent. It saw him as he clambered up from the gloomy court to the first landing. It saw him enter the house, listening for a moment, playing his horrid circle of light here and there, and then going straight to loot and quarry. Terror clogged the atmosphere with its vibrations. It beat upon my disembodied mind, questing through the deserted house, and brought it to the point of a raw agony.

"Silence and sound had now joined hands to fill the house with their commotion.

"Then there was a click, a scratch somewhere, and my mind darted back into my body. With a stealthy leap I left my bed, not quite sure what I was about to do. There lay my wife asleep, in the next room my children. I felt, somehow, as if I must walk round and round them, drawing a tight circle which I would allow no outsider to cross. I had a sense that I was in the midst of a naked plain; by a burnt-out fire my wife and

children slept on the ground, exhausted but restless; on every side the dark pressed in upon me, full of countless horrors just beyond the reach of my straining eyes; I must keep wide awake and walk round and round. I was at bay, come what might out of that baleful darkness. Nor would I wait too close to my charges, expecting the rush of my foe. I would go out to meet him, weapon in hand.

"I stole out of the door and down the hallway. Though I can hardly have been aware of it then, I remember now that my bare feet seemed to pad flatly on the cold floor. My shoulders hunched down. My head was thrust forward. My weight was balanced on my hips by a pull along my crouching thighs. My arms swung wide and loose, one fist clutching my hammer with hard fingers. It was no longer the dark house through which I passed that held my thoughts, but that flaming point of danger, the window on the fire-escape. There my horrid enemy awaited me. I moved on in the tense blackness, without one impulse to switch on the lights. I had entirely forgotten them, had forgotten that with a touch of my finger I might drive out the dark. No, my

foe was unavoidable, but when he drew a little nearer he would find me ready for him.

"There was the window, when I came to it, and I could make out in the darkness that the shade was still drawn as I had left it. But just behind it, my panic told me, was a gray figure of malice and evil. I had ceased to consider the little noises of the floor under my tread or the loud throbbings of my pulse. My imagination was too busy, in a mad flutter, forming a thousand plans. One followed another with such speed that all of them seemed to come together, crowding, jostling. I told myself that I had better stand by and brain the miscreant with my hammer when, once inside, he stood up to take his bearings. I told myself that I had better merely wait for him to pry the window open and then strike him as he entered. I told myself that I had better, not delaying even that long, dash my hammer through the pane at the first sign from without that it was being tampered with. But suppose there should be two of them! And suppose a random bullet should catch me in the dark! At that moment I felt a hundred bullets tearing their way into my flesh. No, it would be best

of all by some forestalling act to challenge the beast on his own ground. I would let the shade up slowly and look through, to be certain of my course. Clutching the hammer in my right hand, I reached out my left to the shade.

"My shaking left hand fumbled. The next instant the shade escaped my awkward hold and flew up to the roller with a wild crash.

"The dark house behind me shrieked reverberations. All my terrors smote me like a tempest, crushing the breath out of me. They seemed to lift me up and hurl me backward, and yet to keep me frozen desperately to that spot. Even in my panic moment, however, I had time to see that the fire-escape was empty. No one knelt there, as I had expected, with tool or weapon. I looked quickly up and down, toward the roof and toward the court, and saw that everything was as peaceful as usual at such an hour. And then, wondering a little that I could make out so much in the darkness, I sent my gaze further into the night, and discovered that the sky had begun to redden. I knew that the dawn was upon me.

"I cannot tell what an ineffable surcease of fear came with the discovery. A tidal wave of

calm rolled in from that remote horizon which I could not see for house-tops. The wave lifted me upon its great shoulders, tossed me till I felt giddy with relief. Thus lulling me, it flowed into me at every pore, cooling my fever. I felt those hot, dry terrors quenched everywhere within my brain and body, as if they had been flames, and this were really a rush of healing water. As the flames went out, I expanded with a joy as enormous as the universe. My breast rose in a spasmodic inhalation. My head went back a little as my eyes traced the pink flush up the sky. Unconsciously, I half-lifted my arms toward the morning which brought this magnificent renewal of peace. Never again could I doubt that men had once worshiped the sun from the very depths of their hearts and needs. Was not this unconscious gesture of mine actually a gesture of worship such as the first shepherds used on the oldest plains when they saw the sun come up and greeted it with joyful reverence, knowing that they and their flocks were secure for another day?

"I imagine it was. Still, my reverence evaporated as rapidly as my grotesque fears. To tell my story quite accurately, I must admit that I

completed my gesture with a hearty yawn and shook myself. I listened with satisfaction to the sound of a horse's shoes pounding hollowly along the street. I realized that I had been a fool. Oddly enough, I remembered my one spell of seasickness, which had disappeared, as if it had never been, the moment I stepped on land. Still, I remembered also, it had left me a little sore, as this ordeal left me. I perceived that I was extraordinarily tired. Well, I would go to bed and make up for time lost. How I slept!

"So I maintain," Clarkson concluded, "that fear goes deeper into us than most of us ever guess. It was twisted into our tissues at a time when fear was the price of life. That time has passed, but fear has not. If it has no real objects to fix itself upon, it invents them."

THE LAST HERETIC

IT must have been about 1970 that I first met Randolph Schuyler. I had, it is true, noticed him before that time going in and out of his house in Charlton Street, but I had thought no more about him than that he obviously belonged to the old régime which even then seemed so dim. Our actual meeting came about, I remember, by accident. Having backed gradually up his stoop in order to see over the heads of a sidewalk full of people who had gathered to watch a Klan parade go by, I had the misfortune to tread upon the toes of the old gentleman who had just emerged from his doorway. He met my apologies, which I doubtless made profuse because of my feeling that he would hardly understand our honest modern manners, with a pardon at once so kindly and so ironic that I found my interest in him many times enlarged. A few days later I greeted him on the street, and not long after that took occasion to carry to his house in

person a letter which the postman had carelessly left in my box. The details of our ripening acquaintance have now escaped my memory, but I am not likely soon to forget the memorable evening when, having been invited to dine with him, I stumbled upon his secret.

Here was a man who had been overlooked not only by the Preliminary Census of 1929, but also by the Final Inquisition of 1940, and who dissented, so far as I could learn, from every sovereign tenet of the Fundamentalists.

Why I did not immediately turn him over to the police is a mystery to me. I had been taught in as strict a school as any in Manhattan, and at Amherst had heard with conviction the prescribed lectures on Fundamentalism, Americanism, and Censorship. There was, however, something diabolical about the charm of this cheerful rebel, and I succumbed, as I venture to think most men would have done in the circumstances. My defection proves, it seems to me, that the Fathers of the Inquisition were right in their ruthlessness toward the heretics in those bitter days. A few such survivors as Schuyler would have imperiled the whole victory.

"You are clever to guess my secret," he said when my face had suddenly betrayed my horror. "I suppose I should be more worried than I am. The secret, as a matter of fact, has been something of a burden. It has condemned me to an extraordinary loneliness. If you report me to the police, I shall be first a nine-days' scandal and then a living example just long enough to die for my offenses. Little as I care for these aspects of fame, I cannot truly say that they are altogether painful prospects. After all, I have lived for thirty years among Fundamentalists of an unrelieved orthodoxy, and the most uncomfortable exit from the world has therefore its advantages."

I dare say it was some quirk of curiosity which got the better of me, for I thereupon solemnly promised, to my own astonishment, that I would keep his secret.

"In that case," he thanked me, "I can do no less than be quite frank with you. If, as I suspect, you are merciful because you consider me a sort of specimen too rare to be lightly thrown away, I must try to make your museum entertaining. What shall I tell you first?"

"But how—how—" I stammered.

"How did I avoid the inquisitors? I simply do not know. You are of course aware, though you are too young to remember, that New York was the last region to be subdued. Our own Fundamentalists had to summon aid from the Ku Klux Klan in the South, the White Ribbon Legion in the Middle West, and the Watch and Ward Crusaders in Massachusetts. Even then the task was difficult. I do not like to think of the blood which flowed in Greenwich Village. At the time I was so desperate that I made no effort to save myself. This may explain my incredible good fortune, if I may call it that. The Final Inquisition through some error passed me by, I lived here quietly undisturbed, and in the end I came to breathe freely once again. Out of the millions of the unpersuaded possibly there were others whose fate was similar to mine, but I was too discreet to look for them, and no one of them ever found me out. I honestly believe that I am now the last heretic in the United States. You will forgive me if I take a certain pleasure in the distinction."

"Have you," I asked, perhaps too gently, "no sense of sin?"

"None whatever. And I have generally observed that those who have a strong sense of sin have very little of any other kind. After all, consider where that feeling comes from. To have it a man must be sure that he has done what is displeasing to the gods; and to be sure of that he must know what the gods require of men. Now, I have gone here and there over the earth a great many thousand miles without ever happening upon a god, talking to him, or learning the demands which he and his fellows make of me and mine. I have questioned numerous men who were sure they were in the counsels of the gods, yet I have never entirely trusted one of them. The best of such men disagree among themselves, doubtless for the reason that they all argue from what I, in my modest fashion, must call inadequate evidence. They tell me that the gods whispered their secrets to men who lived long ago, and who wrote their knowledge down in books. Reading these books, however, I find them full of manifest absurdities regarding history and science and full of manifest contradictions regarding morals. I can consequently do no better than choose among them the precepts and examples which

confirm my own experiences. But this I do with other books which no one calls inspired. Nor do I find myself more thoroughly convinced when I examine the great traditions which, first based upon the holy books, are in some quarters held to have broadened down and gradually to have included the whole truth. Looking over the chronicles of these traditions, I discover that they have regularly resisted novel truths and persecuted the truth-seekers as long as it was possible, never learning anything from the fact that they have so often had eventually to confess themselves mistaken and to honor persons whom formerly they dishonored. As neither the books nor the traditions bring me face to face with the gods whom they proclaim, I suspend my judgment and do not scourge myself for deeds which this or that authority calls unlawful."

"What appalling egotism!" I burst forth, partly to shield myself from his supple arguments. "You set yourself up against all the collective wisdom of mankind."

Schuyler smiled brightly.

"Why, so I must seem to you to do. It is so long since I have discoursed with a contemporary

that I had quite forgotten how insolent an independent thought would look to him. But let me remind you that groups of men, large or small, have their egotisms, too, which often clash with din and fury. And my researches, to say nothing of my recollections, assure me that the smaller group have not seldom overthrown the larger, and that mere individuals in their time have brought majorities round to their way of thinking."

Here I saw that I had the better of the argument and, though I was Schuyler's guest and junior, I did not hesitate to press it.

"Then you must admit the logical consequences of your position. You see truth emerging from the clashes of one party with another. Why can you not perceive that the truth has finally emerged, after centuries of wrangling, into the clear light of Fundamentalism? If truth has a history, as you maintain, it is naturally most powerful in its latest form."

"This is most refreshing," said the incorrigible old man. "I see I have denied myself a considerable amount of entertainment by getting out of touch with the younger generation. It may dis-

tress you, but I do not believe that truth, for all it has a history, is necessarily progressive. It moves, I note, in cycles, ebbs and flows, rises and falls, advances and slips back. I have always suspected it to be one of the whimsical devices of the gods, about whom I know so little, that the reason, after reaching a certain point, is once more engulfed by a wave of sentiment or ignorance and then has slowly to struggle into power again. It had struggled to that certain point at the beginning of this century, whereupon the uninstructed and the unimaginative, as if envying it its prosperity, rose and destroyed it. As I view the matter, this was merely another barbarian invasion. I so viewed it in 1940. If I had been shaped of the clay of martyrs I might have fought the Final Inquisition and lost my head for my pains. Instead, I bowed my head as the civilized Greeks no doubt did when they saw their reasonable opinions being overturned by the jangling Oriental sects which had invaded their world. My world was being invaded by barbarians who hated science and the reason. They were stronger than I. I smiled and settled down in my own dominions in Charlton Street. The

barbarians have furnished me one unbroken comedy ever since."

I saw I could not endure this blasphemy any further, so I turned the conversation from theology to politics.

In this realm, it turned out, Randolph Schuyler was no less incorrigible than in the other. Though he was, as his name indicated, of strictly native stock, he made merry at the expense of true Americanism.

"How the trail of Amerigo Vespucci comes down through the ages! Amerigo probably never made the voyages he bragged about, but he wrote a book and thus fixed his name on the new hemisphere. In something of this same fashion the outspoken Anglo-Saxons, though they have had the help of many other races in building the United States, have fixed their language, or one a good deal like it, upon the nation, and so claim the whole credit for the undertaking. At the time of the Final Inquisition about one tenth of the Americans were colored, and about one sixth Catholic, and a large proportion so decidedly not Anglo-Saxon that they were not even Nordic; yet the White Protestant Nordics forced their

will upon the rest and made the Government an unblushing oligarchy."

"Surely you realize the importance of having one country, one flag, one speech, one culture."

"I realize the importance of such a unity to the oligarchs, but I am afraid the importance to the country is not so great. Recalling the folk-songs of the Negroes, and their powerful emotional impulses, I think the land is a much less desirable place to live in, now these particular Americans have been condemned to the rank of songless, sullen helots. Recalling the secular light-heartedness of the Catholics, though I never liked their theology, and the international sympathies of the Jews, I take emphatically less pleasure in the American scene, now all these tribes have been obliged to settle down to a drab Protestantism and a touchy nationalism. It seems to me that the Fathers of the Inquisition were about as wasteful of precious human materials as their ancestors had been of the natural resources of the continent."

"Then why don't you go back—"

"To the land from which I came, whatever be

its name? Forgive me if I cap verses with you out of an old song which was sung during the Preliminary Census. But I am refreshed to a pitch of frivolity by your question. I have lived, you see, so long to myself that I had forgotten that such witty repartee still exists. As to your question itself, I might be willing to go back if it were not for one thing, which is that I am, in my way, an American, and have nowhere else to go. I belong to an American minority. Come to think of it, I am the American minority. In the circumstances I feel almost what a Fundamentalist would call a duty to stay here. I believe the country ought to have a minority within its borders. Doubtless in the blithe economy of the gods I have been spared to play this necessary rôle. To be sure, I have not been conspicuous, but that is because the majority is at the moment so overwhelming. If another party of dissent arises, I shall declare myself and hand on to its members the torch which I have kept alight, however feebly, within my prudent bosom. When that fortunate day appears, the young minority, remembering me, will not have to

blush at the thought that they inherit a past which, even for a second, once lacked any minority whatsoever."

I nearly suffocated as I listened to his words. Not only did he insist that the old days of varying opinions might come back, but he insisted that such a thing was philosophically desirable. So great was my sense of horror that I could not speak.

"That unborn minority," he went on, "will discover that if we have a Constitution, we have also a Bill of Rights. They will investigate our history and discover that we are a federation of states and also a federation of cultures. The dream of an absolute unity, they will understand, was a vain dream, because it was an unscientific dream. It assumed that the original Anglo-Saxon element could assimilate all sorts of foreign elements to itself and show no differences. What chemistry! And what anthropology to hold that the unchecked dominance of one racial group would produce a richer civilization than a natural mixture of all the component group!"

I saw it was hopeless to expect any sound

views from such a creature. It took all my resolution not to recall my promise to keep his secret and not to rush out to the police. But I reflected, in the midst of my anger, that he really did no harm, and I did not like to run the risk of being suspected of complicity. If he should later become talkative, the Censors would know how to deal with him.

Meanwhile, however, Schuyler cherished in his library, which was stowed away in a vault beneath his house, books which would have driven the Censors to distraction. Not a book was expurgated. With an irresistible inquisitiveness I looked into several of them that evening, at the same time listening to a shameless series of comments from the heretic. He showed me volumes, printed in the United States before the establishment of the Censors, which moved nonchalantly among the most devilish theories. Some weighed the relative value of all the religions ever invented; some compared the political systems of the world and actually found others at some points preferable to the American; some expounded chimerical schemes for peace or utopian notions about what they called a just division of

goods among mankind; some set forth without dissent the most fantastic proposals for innovations in the arts; some actually praised the ancient heretics. The pre-Fundamentalist poets and dramatists and novelists, in all their nakedness, here held up their heads quite unabashed. Though I read hastily, it was with a fearful fascination. I had not dreamed, having been nurtured in a purer age and taste, that such things could ever have been written. I felt my face flushing, my hands trembling with excitement. Yet Schuyler had lived so long among these evil books that he was unperturbed. He even laughed at me for my distress.

"You remind me," he said, "of the unimaginative moralists who used to set up an elderly twittering about 'free love' whenever a novelist looked for a moment behind the scenes and caught a glimpse of the strings which pulled the puppets in the dance of sex. It was they who brought the Censors into power, they and the unimaginative patriots who strangled political speculation by calling it sedition unless it flattered the ruling oligarchs. In my more vindictive moments I wish these moralists and patriots could suffer

from the reign of dullness which they have ushered in. My reason, however, denies me the pleasure of vindictiveness. I realize that dullness is their natural food and that they do not know what they are missing."

"But what order, what stability, could you expect in a world habitually confused by unsound doctrines and unclean pictures of human life?"

"Unsound? How can we know what doctrines are unsound until they have been proposed, tested, and accepted or rejected? Unclean? Do you blame a mirror for accurately reflecting the faces which look into it? The earth is nothing if it is not a trying-ground for all the ideas that the poor creatures on it can invent. Most of them are sure to perish while they are still ideas, without ever taking root in the soil of conduct. That soil, however, always grows dry or sour unless it is constantly rejuvenated by these new seeds, fertile or not.—But I am afraid that I am becoming solemn, or I should never use so unscientific a metaphor. To answer your question most directly, I could not expect a Fundamentalist order and stability in a world kept stirred by new ideas, but then, neither should I desire it.

Though my voluntary survival during thirty years of Fundamentalism may not indicate it, I genuinely prefer a noisy life to a peaceful death."

This abominable frivolity both saved Schuyler from my wrath and saved my soul from his contagion. I often wish I could have so far escaped from the sly influence as to denounce him and let him pay the penalty. Still more do I wish I could be sure that in my mercy there was no fear of him. And yet, remembering those days in which my conscience tormented me with the demand that I make his existence known, I confess that nothing dissuaded me as much as the certainty that if I gave him up he would laugh at me. He was not merely a faithful rebel; he was a cheerful rebel. If I had informed the Censors, they would have had to turn to me for evidence, and I should have had to face him in their presence. That hour, I am afraid, was what I felt that I could not endure. Much as I should have rejoiced to see him punished for his contumacy, I should not have been able to meet that amused smile of his as he listened to my version of his opinions, perhaps explaining it

to the Censors in language more precise than mine. He would have ridiculed us in the lethal chamber, I am convinced. With right and virtue on our side, we should nevertheless have been made uncomfortable by the ironical confidence of his manner. This, perhaps, is by itself a reason why the land is better off since it is rid of him. Minds like his, free minds they call themselves, are such enemies of our upright and dignified society that there can be no truce between them and it.

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